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THE FRIENDSHIPS

OF

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

AS RECORDED IN LETTERS FROM

HER LITERARY CORRESPONDENTS

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EDITED BY

THE REV. A. G. L'ESTRANGE

EDITOR OF "THE LIFE OF MARY RUSSELL MITFORD" AND
AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF THE REV. W. HARNESS"
"THE VILLAGE OF PALACES" ETC.

"Whoever reads my letters—that is, the letters written *to* me—will find them interesting."—M. R. MITFORD to J. T. FIELDS

NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE

1882

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THE FRIENDSHIPS

OF

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

INTRODUCTION.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.—MRS. MITFORD'S SOCIABILITY.—HER LETTERS AND VERSES.—DR. MITFORD'S CHARACTER.—HIS SPECULATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH M. ST. QUINTIN.

THERE is something dear to us in every object associated with those we have loved or admired. The dwelling-place of a celebrated person, though now merely an ivy-covered ruin, possesses something of national interest; and the gift of a departed friend, be it but a faded flower, is treasured as inestimably precious. This feeling is sometimes purely sentimental, and exists even where the connection of the memorial with the person has been accidental and unimportant. But I imagine that in most cases there is some solid foundation for such emotions. As the mental characteristics of man are closely connected with his physical constitution, so are they also largely influenced by the surroundings of his daily life. Occasionally we can directly trace the bearing of some unexpected occurrence upon our future destiny, and the views of the most eminent people have been largely affected by the age and country in which they have lived.

Thus to those by whom the memory of Mary Russell Mitford is cherished, the letters which form these volumes will be interesting not merely as having been valued and preserved by her, but as having to some extent left an impress upon her mind. She sought to profit by the thoughts of

others, and the bright mosaic-work of her own letters is largely formed of reset gems. Here, also, we learn who her friends were, with what sentiments they regarded her, and what subjects they thought would give her pleasure. Beyond this the letters have an intrinsic value of their own as coming from the pens of some of the most successful authors of the day; and, as their character must depend upon the recipient as well as the sender, we may suppose that, being written to the authoress of "Our Village," they will not only contain literary judgments and opinions founded upon wide experience, but will also confide some more recondite and personal feelings.

We naturally inquire, first of all, how Miss Mitford, who lived in a secluded Berkshire village, and seldom visited London,* became acquainted with so many celebrities. More than one cause produced this result. She was a successful dramatist, the editor of an annual, a contributor to periodicals, and from time to time people wrote to her expressing admiration for her works. But mere literary success has never made any one socially popular; other attractions are requisite, and Mrs. Barrett Browning considered Miss Mitford's conversation to be even better than her books.† Thus we find that in the summer-time, when she gave strawberry-parties at her cottage, the road leading to it was crowded with the carriages of all the rank and fashion in the county. By example as well as precept she "brightened the path along which she dwelt." Her kindly nature did not exhaust itself in a girlish enthusiasm for pets and flowers, but went forth to meet her fellow-men and women, whose virtues seemed to expand and whose faults to vanish at her approach. "There is," she writes, "an atmosphere of love, a sunshine of fancy, in which objects appear clearer and brighter, and from such I sometimes paint."

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* Except in early youth.

† "In my own mind, and Mr. Kenyon agrees with me, she herself is better and stronger than any of her books, and her letters and conversation show more grasp of intellect and general power than would be inferable from her finished compositions," Mr. Fields says. "Her voice was a beautiful chime of silver bells."

Miss Mitford's friendships extended from the highest to the lowest classes of society, but her sympathies were especially enlisted on behalf of genius. Great thoughts and noble enterprises had a peculiar charm for her; hence she cultivated those eminent persons with whom her talents brought her into connection, and drew round her a brilliant circle of authors, artists, and politicians. Her playful humor and joyous enthusiasm cheered and refreshed their lives of toil, and they in turn reflected back upon her an enduring lustre. Miss Mitford does not stand upon a cold, isolated height, but will ever be associated with the intimacies she formed and the society in which she moved. She even carried on an affectionate correspondence with many persons whom she had never seen.

It is not improbable that her sympathetic tendencies were partly hereditary, for both her parents were essentially sociable and fond of company. Her mother formed the centre of a little homely coterie at Reading, and her letters to her daughter invariably record some grand five-o'clock dinner or select "sandwich party" at which she had been, or some friendly gathering at her own house. Her accounts of these festivities show considerable observation, and are amusing both for her opinions about the guests and for the minute details she gives of the good fare at the entertainments.

MRS. MITFORD *to* DR. MITFORD.

Hans Place, June 2, 1802.

Sweet Mezza* is hard at work doing a prize composition. She does not return to dinner till half-past four, as her drawing-master attends at half-past three. The paper does not, you will observe, give the same account as you heard yesterday at Mr. Taplin's of the Union Masquerade, but Rowden saw Lady Bessborough last evening, who was there, and who mentioned the confusion that prevailed in similar terms. Her ladyship's own dress was demolished in the scuffle. This, however, does not deter her from attending the masquerade at Ranelagh to-night, which, it is thought, will be better conducted. She mentioned the Prince supped

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* Miss Mitford.

alone with Mrs. Fitzherbert and another lady, and that their privacy was broken in upon by the mob ere they had finished their repast. Mrs. St. Quintin pressed me much to dine with her to-day, but I declined it. She and Miss Rowden are to dine with us to-morrow on the pig you are to send us.

Those who are at all acquainted with Miss Mitford's early history will remember M. St. Quintin, the French *émigré*, at whose school in Hans Place she was educated. The Mitfords became very intimate with his family, and sometimes stayed with them. Miss Rowden was the governess who married M. St. Quintin after the death of his wife.

MRS. MITFORD *to* DR. MITFORD, *Reading, Berks.*

Hans Place, June 3, 1802.

Dr. and Mrs. Harness called on us last evening, and sat near an hour. They wished us to dine there this day, as they had some captain—I forget the name—to dine with them, but Mary's lessons both before and after dinner furnished us with an excuse. I told you I had asked Mrs. St. Q. and Rowden to partake of the pig, and if M. St. Q. is not obliged to go into town he will also dine with us. Dr. H. saw Mr. Harley, and told him that we were at 76 Hans Place; he may look long ere he finds that number here; but I suppose he will have sense enough to go to 22 to learn where we are.

* * * * *

I have bought some salmon, and had a baked gooseberry pudding made, which, with my pig, will afford ample provision for our small party; and purchased a bottle of sherry. We only wish you were here to partake of it with us, as it would relish much better.

Mezza has got her little desk here, and her great dictionary, and is hard at her studies beside me, on which account and the warmth of the morning her little spirits are all abroad to obtain the prize, sometimes hoping, sometimes desponding. It is as well, perhaps, you are not here at present, as you would be in as grand a fidget on the occasion as she herself is. Adieu. God bless you.

Our most affectionate love is yours.

MARY MITFORD.

Postscript by her daughter.

Mumpsa* has been telling you a parcel of stories, for I do not care a brass farthing about the prize, and I am *certain* I shall not have it.

Dear Croppy sends you her love and good wishes.

MISS MITFORD *to* MRS. MITFORD.

Hans Place, Sept. 3, 1802.

M. St. Q. and some of the young ladies and the Wrights are going to Richmond by water on Sunday. They wished me to persuade you to join them there, but I rather thought you would prefer taking a snug dinner in Hans Place at five o'clock with Rowden and Mam Bonette (herself) to joining their Johnny Gilpin's excursion. M. St. Q. wished not to go, for he says that he should enjoy your company much more than the water-party; but as he is going soon to France, and could not go at any other time, and the young folks had set their hearts on the excursion, I persuaded him to go.

You are a dear flatterer, my darling, but I have heard that people always excel most in those things which they are fondest of; if so, I am sure that my *forte* must be writing to my beloved parents, for there is nothing when away from them that affords me so much pleasure as receiving and answering their dear letters.

MRS. MITFORD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Reading, Nov. 14, 1802.

The concert went off extremely well, and the house quite full. We had no vacancy in either of our boxes, as Mrs. Terry (her sister not coming as she expected) applied to me on Thursday morning, and I was happy in giving her the only vacant place. For fear of consequences, I durst not put Monck and her in the same box, therefore we marshalled our company in the following order: In the front row of the stage-box Mrs. Dolly, your aunt, and Mrs. Terry; on the back seat Mr. Annersley, Mr. Robinson, senior, and your father. The other box in front Mrs. Nicholl, Miss Valpy, and myself; and behind us Mr. Monck, Mr. Southgate, and

* A pet name for Mrs. Mitford.

Mr. Matthew Robinson took their station. The party drank tea here, and Mr. D.'s coach conveyed the female part of it to the theatre a little before seven. Mr. and Mrs. Lefevre were on the opposite side of the house, so that we had no conversation till the concert was finished, when Mr. L. came to pay his compliments to me and my friends, and old dad went round to chat with Mrs. L. When the house was sufficiently cleared to afford me an easy passage, I joined her also, and was agreeably surprised to find that, during the time we were waiting for their coach to get up, Mr. L. had desired your friend Monck to put his nightcap in his pocket, and accompany them and us back to Heckfield. The night was dry, though cold, and, being moonlight, our drive was a very pleasant one; and we reached their truly hospitable mansion before twelve. Sandwiches, negus, etc., were immediately brought in, and after half an hour's pleasant chat, we separated for the night. I cannot attempt to detail what an agreeable day we had on Friday. The gentlemen dedicated the morning to field sports; the ladies accompanied me round the grounds, and afterwards we took a ride round Lord Rivers's park before we dressed for dinner, when there was an addition to our numbers of a Mr. Milton, his wife, and two daughters; the youngest of whom, Miss Fanny Milton,* is a very lively, pleasant young woman. I do not mean to infer that Miss Milton may not be equally agreeable, but the other took a far greater share in the conversation, and, playing casino great part of the evening with Mr. S. Lefevre, Mr. Monck, and your old Mumpsa, it gave me an opportunity of seeing her in a more favorable light than her sister.

The next letter was written during Miss Mitford's visit to the north.

MRS. MITFORD *to* MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

Bertram House, Saturday evening, Sept. 27, 1806.

It appears as if Providence kindly favored the wish of

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* The Miss Fanny Milton above mentioned afterwards became the celebrated Mrs. Trollope. Her father was Vicar of Heckfield, near Reading, three miles from Swallowfield.

your friends to give you an agreeable impression of Northumberland. The weather is quite heavenly. You smile at local attachments, but I think the enthusiasm of your character will kindle into affection when you behold the spot that gave birth to a parent you have so much reason to love and revere.* Dooley is vastly well, but is suspected of having killed one of the Dutch teal; either himself or the old cat did it. The most suspicious circumstance against the poor baronet is that he was caught with one of them in his mouth some days before. I am grieved at the accident, and shall suffer your pet to be as little in the garden as possible, and keep a strict eye over him. He is certainly much more anxious to go there than he used to be.

I am half sorry that you did not see the Marquis of Exeter's in your way down. So lovely a place would have had additional charms from the fineness of the weather, and it may be tinged with November gloom when you return. Her majesty came by Three Mile Cross, and so up by Dr. Jones's and the church at Shinfield, on her return from Sir William Pitt's to Windsor on Wednesday; but the showers had induced her to substitute their coach for her own sociable, and as Lady Pitt, according to etiquette, waited on the queen, the next morning she went in the royal sociable, and returned in her own carriage. Our worthy Dr. and Mrs. Perry dined that day with Mrs. Brocas, so were not at home when her majesty, with truly royal speed, whirled by their cottage, which she did at the rate of twelve miles an hour at least.

I went past them between Bernard Body's and the Cross, and did but just get in time to Heckfield Place. The two ladies received me in great spirits. Mr. Lefevre got down to his own room the day before, and Mrs. S. L. had been out a short airing with him in the carriage. We were soon informed dinner was upon the table, and Mr. Bulley, senior, joined us in the dining-room. We had some delightful eels at the top, soup in the middle, and a haunch of Lord Stowell's venison at the bottom, a boiled chicken on

* These encomiums are very creditable to Mrs. Mitford, and probably had great influence with her daughter.

my side, and what was on the other I do not recollect. Some venison was sent in to Gog,* but he thought it very bad, and sent for some chicken. We had after, a brace of partridge at top, a very fine rabbit at the bottom, a dish of pease in the middle, tipsy-cake on one side, and grape tart on the other. Except some pease, I dined on the fish and venison, and tasted nothing else. Their greenhouse grapes, which now succeed the hot-house, are admirable, and we had some very good peaches, a pine, pears, and walnuts. The pine not being tasted, Mrs. Lefevre ordered it to be put in my carriage, with many apologies for its not being so large as she could have wished. As Mr. Bulley was engaged to a sandwich party at Mrs. H. Marsh's, Mrs. Lefevre, as soon as she left the dining-room, rang to order the servants to get tea and coffee by seven, as she thought Mr. Bulley would wish to be off soon after. Magog, who had gone to visit her good man, returned to us to say that Mr. L. hoped I would excuse his *déshabillé*, and begged we would take tea and coffee in his room ; and on the old lady ringing again for the butler to tell him to take it thither at the hour she had ordered, he told her his master had directed him to bring it in immediately, so we repaired thither without delay. I am happy to say our good friend looks better than I expected, and was in excellent spirits. He, as well as the ladies, begged to be most kindly remembered to you both.

The Mitfords were liberal in their hospitalities at this time. In a letter, dated March, 1806, Mrs. Mitford writes to her husband: "Will you purchase a dozen and a half new doileys, as ours are getting too shabby for company. I mention eighteen, as when a party amounts to fourteen or fifteen, which ours sometimes do, it does not look well to see them of two different sorts. And, if you conveniently can, bring six pounds of wax or spermaceti candles."

The following lines, written by Mrs. Mitford during the absence of her husband and daughter in the north, will give some idea of her simple and affectionate nature:

---

* Mr. Shaw Lefevre.

Though Mitford's absence causes many a sigh,
And tears unbidden fill his consort's eye,
Detained at Kirkby waiting for his friend
Till dark November's gloomy fogs descend,
Yet has that month to me superior charms
To those when summer's sun our bosom warms,
For in that month was born the friend most dear,
The constant partner of each joy and care;
And faithful memory, with grateful lay,
Shall fondly hail her husband's natal day.
Some little votive wreath to deck her strain
Of every Muse she asks, but asks in vain.
She seeks no flowers a garland to prepare,
They bloom not when stern winter chills the air;
Nor needs her Mitford ornaments like these,
Secure by genuine worth all hearts to please.
But unassisted by the tuneful Nine
Can she attempt his virtues to define;
Depict his ardor when, at friendship's call,
From distant lands he flew to yonder hall?

In calm domestic scenes his worth revere,
See the kind husband, the fond parent here!
May each revolving year behold him blessed
With peace, best inmate of the human breast;
The cheerful glow of health his cheeks adorn,
Whose eyes still sparkle like the brilliant morn;
And many a season pass unmarked by care
In social intercourse with friends most dear.
Oh, may his darling child, his soul's delight,
As now with sweet affection meet his sight!
And should some virtuous youth obtain the fair,
Making her happiness his constant care,
Will not her father, pleased though loth, resign
Parental rights at wedlock's sacred shrine?

MRS. MITFORD *to* DR. MITFORD.

Oct. 6, 1806.

Much has been said in the public prints of the sum expended by the Mayor and Corporation of Liverpool in entertaining the Prince.* There is a tale in circulation here —whether it may have reached Northumberland I know not —that his royal highness asked for three things during dinner, which were not to be found amidst the innumerable

* The Prince of Wales.

profusion of delicacies which were provided for the occasion. Of the various kinds of fish the Prince chose salmon, and called for some salad to eat with it; but, to the great dismay of the mayor and aldermen, salad there was none! With that politeness for which he is so distinguished, he said it was of no consequence—a little cucumber would answer the purpose just as well; but that was no more to be obtained than the other. So, after graciously receiving the apologies of the mortified host, he called for a stand of cruets, and mixed up some oil and vinegar to eat with his fish, and the Body Corporate began a little to recover from their embarrassment, when unfortunately he asked for a glass of soda-water. This completed the climax of their distress. Had I learnt to make embellishments to plain, simple matter of fact, I might add that his worship the mayor could not sleep for three nights in consequence of his vexation, and that half the Court of Aldermen fell ill from the same cause; but my story ends with the glass of soda-water, and I shall dismiss the subject with remarking that no genteel family in Liverpool will in future admit salmon at their table without offering salad and cucumber to their guests at the same time, and it would not be at all wonderful if, instead of liqueurs, they should hand round soda-water at the conclusion of their great dinners, and whoever should dare to refuse it will at least not be considered as a Prince's man.

MRS. MITFORD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Tuesday, Oct. 21, 1806.

Your letter of the 16th, my beloved, I have just received, and, encompassed as I am with all the horrors of an election before my eyes, it is the greatest cordial that can be. Nothing can exceed the madness of the people in Reading for your father's return. I own I hope his squire will keep him where he is till he bring you both back: to have you and your dear "ittey" obliged to return with election speed such an immense journey when probably everything will be settled before you could arrive, is what by no means I can reconcile myself to. Impatient as I am to embrace you both, I should apprehend a thousand ill consequences

from the fatigue of so long a journey taken in such a manner.

* * * * *

John, Simeon, Edward, and Dick are canvassing in all directions, and the bells are ringing most merrily; the people, men, women, and children, were standing about in all directions, and never were two poor souls so stared at as Victoire and myself as we drove through the town. I think, from the earnestness of their gazing at us, they expected to see your father pop his head out of the chaise, and I was obliged to bow on all sides to return the salutations of the multitude, though convinced no particular respect was intended me, as I could see a look of disappointment in some of their faces at seeing only two females in the carriage. Chamberlayn was assailed by inquiries when his master would be back. He stated the immense distance, and said his return was very uncertain, but they were all sure he would be back as soon as the news reached him.

Right Hon. Lord Charles Aynsley's,
Little Harle Tower, Northumberland.

Dr. Mitford returned from Northumberland at full speed for this election, and Miss Mitford piteously complains of being left to travel back alone.

MRS. MITFORD *to* DR. MITFORD, *Richardson's Hotel, London.*
Wednesday, 4 o'clock. Feb. 26, 1808.

I was doubtful, my dear Mitford, whether to write to you to-day or wait till we heard from you, which I hope and trust we shall to-morrow morning; but, receiving a letter from Bocking, the post determined me. Her ladyship* has been in a very grand bustle, as the King of France, Monsieur the Duke d'Angoulême, Duke de Berry, Duke de Grammont, and the Prince de Condé, with all the nobles that composed his majesty's suite at Gosfield, dined at the deanery last Thursday. Mr. and Mrs. Pepper (Lady Fitzgerald's daughter) were asked to meet him, because she was brought up and educated at the French court in Louis XVI.'s reign.

* Lady Charles Aynsley, Miss Mitford's cousin.

General and Mrs. Milner for the same reason, and Colonel, Mrs., and Miss Burgoyne—all the party quick at languages. The storm alarmed Lady C. not a little; it prevented the carrier going to town, in the first instance, and, in the second, she began to fear the king might not be able to come, after all the preparations made for him. The Milners were so anxious about it that the General, who commands at Colchester, ordered five hundred pioneers to clear the road from that city to Bocking. On his majesty's approach the Bocking bell proclaimed it, and, on driving up, the full military band which Lord C. had engaged for the occasion struck up "God Save the King" in the entrance-passage. In his majesty's coach were Monsieur and the Dukes d'Angoulême and Berry. All stood till dinner was announced, when our cousin handed his majesty—Lord C. walking before him with a candle. The king sat at the top of the table, with Lady C. on his right and Lord C. on his left. Mrs. Milner's and Mrs. Pepper's French butlers were lent for the occasion. The bill of fare was in French top and bottom, and the king appeared well pleased with his entertainment. They were all dressed in stars, and the insignia of different orders. They were three hours at dinner, and at eight the dessert was placed on the table—claret, and all kinds of French wine, fruit, etc., a beautiful cake at the top, with "*Vive le Roi de France*" baked round it, and the quarterings of the French army in colored pastry, which had a novel and pretty effect. The three youngest children then entered with white satin military sashes over their shoulders, painted in bronze "*Vive le Roi de France—Prospérité a Louis dixhuit.*" Charles, on being asked for a toast, immediately gave "The King of France," which was drunk with the utmost sensibility by all present, and one of the little girls came up to his majesty, and, with great expression, spoke ten lines in French composed for the occasion. Louis soon followed the ladies into the drawing-room, when again all stood, and Lady C. served her royal guest with coffee, which being over, she told him that some of the neighboring families were come for a little dance in the dining-room, and that perhaps his majesty would be seated to cards. He

good-humoredly said that he would first go and pay his respects to the company in the next room, which was the thing she wished; therefore handed him in, his family and nobles following, which was a fine sight for those assembled, in all sixty-two. At the king's desire, she introduced each person to him by name, and, on the king sitting down, the band struck up, and Monsieur, who is supposed to be the finest dancer in Europe, led off with Lady C., who, spite of Lord Charles's horror and her own fears for her lame ankle, hopped down two country-dances with him, and they were followed by Charlotte and the Duke d'Angoulême. I have hurried over this account from her ladyship's letter, and the Chelmsford paper, which, having been interrupted while writing, she sent at the same time.

MRS. MITFORD *to* DR. MITFORD, *Hudson's Hotel, London.*

Feb. 17, 1809.

I would not omit writing, my dearest husband, though in our still-life way nothing has occurred since I wrote to you yesterday. You would have supposed Bertram House was turned into the Hall of Criticism had you seen the number of books with which the dining-room has been bespread all the morning; in the first place, the Bible and Mrs. Trimmer's Sacred History, next Johnson's folio dictionary, Guthrie and Adams's Geographical Grammars, etc., etc. When I tell you our treasure transcribed the whole canto in the course of yesterday, though you knew she possessed the pen of a ready writer, you will allow she has outdone her usual outdoings. The notes she has left to poor Pill Garlick to transcribe, and I have not yet entered on my task, though I have been scolded divers times this blessed morning for not setting to it. Pity me, for I must grub away all the evening to get it accomplished. We have read it over three several times, and at each reading discovered new beauties. The only fault to me perhaps originates more in my family pride than that any other person might consider it as a defect, but I feel rather grieved that my illustrious relation, Lord William Russell, is, as it were, smuggled in between the old Grecians, when he might have

been so conspicuous a figure on the canvas, and would have afforded, through the medium of his friends, Monmouth and Cavendish, an undeniable proof that friendship glowed with as bright an ardor in British hearts at that period as in any of the most renowned ages of antiquity. I the rather wonder that our fair friend let slip so good an opportunity for a tribute of just praise to the ancestor of the Devonshire family.

Mr. Horne, in his edition of Mrs. Barrett Browning's letters, tells us that Miss Mitford's father was "a jovial, stick-at-nothing, fox-hunting squire of the three-bottle class"—a tolerably correct description, if we substitute "coursing" for "fox-hunting" and "doctor" for "squire." His daughter says he was the "handsomest and cheerfulest" of men, and it appears from incidental notices that he had a keen relish for fine wine, and that indulgence in it did not invariably make him the better. Miss Mitford, no doubt, owed to him much of her natural buoyancy of spirit and some of her predilection for country pursuits and for the canine race, of which greyhounds were his favorites. Children and dogs loved him, and so did others who did not understand him, or refused to see his faults. Women have generally represented Dr. Mitford as amiable and pleasant; there was something cheering and hearty in his familiarity. The character is not uncommon; he was one of those good-looking, profligate spendthrifts who, reckless of consequences, bring misery upon their families and remain dear to their mothers and daughters. "We often like the foolish better than the wise," writes Miss Mitford, thinking perchance of her own fireside. The man of pleasure is generally acceptable at the moment, and, although he may be thoughtless and unjust, he is seldom calculating or severe. Dr. Mitford often did kind actions, which it is unfair to ignore; he seems even to have had some sort of generosity, and the ease with which he parted with his money was one of his most unfortunate weaknesses. But Miss Mitford's appreciation of her father was mostly due to filial devotion. Never was affection more severely tried. She had to see thousands, seventy thousand pounds, passing out of his careless hands until he

became dependent upon the small pittance she could earn by arduous literary labor.

While Mrs. Mitford was making up little parties at Reading, the doctor was indulging his social proclivities in a wider field. Except to attend a coursing match, he seldom cared to visit the country,* but lived a reckless bachelor life in London, scattering his money among gamblers † and "good fellows," and associating with Whig politicians. Even his connection with M. St. Quintin ‡ proved disastrous. That gentleman, though not very proficient in his scholastic duties, was astute in financial affairs. He induced the doctor to enter into partnership with him in the coal trade, and furnished accounts of the business which would have deceived a much more cautious and scrutinizing man. Large profits were apparently being realized until the doctor refused to advance more capital, and then the whole speculation collapsed and no assets were forthcoming.

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* Mrs. Mitford, May 12, 1806—

"Your teal are all hearty and alive, and wash themselves twenty times a day at least; I visit them constantly to see that they are all there. The laburnums and lilacs are stealing into bloom very fast, the weeping and double-flowering cherries fully out; everything is looking very beautiful, and one of the espalier apple-trees in the garden is a perfect picture, the blossoms are so large and handsome; but I fear it will have lost all its charms before I have the happiness of showing it to you." And in 1806 she writes: "Let not our darling, my dear, generous husband, betray you into an excessive purchase on my account. You can bring no present half so valuable to me as yourself, were you to buy all the rich things the treasures of a nabob could command." In another letter in 1808, in which she says that she is glad he went to Gosfield and had an interview with the French monarch, she adds, "We walked to darling's [Miss Mitford's] favorite hill last night. The nightingales were singing most beautifully, and the face of the country was altogether lovely. How we wished you had been a partaker of our walk! I fear the lilacs will be rather going off before you see them; they have been very handsome; the guelder roses are coming on very fast, and the laburnums are in the very height of their bloom."

† Miss Mitford says that he was considered one of the best six players in London at piquet and whist, at which he lost large sums in St. James's Street.

‡ A French refugee. He had been secretary to the Comte de Moustiers, one of the last ambassadors of Louis XVI. to the Court of St. James.

Not content with involving the doctor in these difficulties, St. Quintin introduced him to the Marquis de Chabannes, one of the Legitimist refugees of the old *régime*, who visited at Hans Place, and of whom, with their powder and puff, high heels, and fine manners, Miss Mitford gives such an exquisite description. Chabannes was descended from an ancient and illustrious family in France, had fought under the great Condé, been decorated with the Order of St. Louis, and now in exile his active mind had turned from campaigning to speculation. His plans and projects were curious and plausible, ingenious in conception, and unfortunate in result. He had an improved method for lighting London; but the most remarkable enterprise he engaged in was that of substituting in France our small and fast stage-coaches for the cheap and commodious diligences.

Dr. Mitford's financial connections with St. Quintin and Chabannes seemed to have commenced as early as 1805, and not to have terminated in 1820. The following correspondence is somewhat interesting and characteristic, showing the nature of these transactions, the artifice of St. Quintin, and the confidence of the doctor, not entirely destroyed even at the last:

M. St. Quintin *to* Dr. Mitford.

Paris, April 10, 1820.

My very dear Friend,—I deferred a few days answering your last letter in order to write to you by the opportunity of our friend Mr. Monck, who leaves Paris sooner than he expected, owing to the meeting of Parliament. It is impossible to recall to my recollection the various money transactions that have taken place between us, excepting in two instances, the first when you were in durance vile, and I got you some money on your paintings to get you out immediately, and the second when I got £50 for you under my own guarantee. I know I went several times to ask money for you, and was sent by you when you did not like to call yourself, but I know likewise that most of my applications were vain. . . . You remember, of course, that I paid to Messrs. Robins £626 3*s.* out of the £2488 I received from your brother for your account. What was that sum for?

Chabannes's fate does not at all astonish me. His whole life has been a long series of imposition; by his alluring prospects held out of great profits he has taken in the longest heads and deepest calculators. I can only deplore and regret that he has so shamefully succeeded with me, who have neither a long head nor deep foresight. I do not so much regret it on account of the £800 I lose by him as on account of the much heavier sum you lose. I have had a very long conversation with your friend, Mr. Monck; we are both of opinion that you could live even in Paris at half the expense you must necessarily incur even at Reading in old Bulley's house, which I understand you are going to take. Of course, I am rather partial to your coming here with your family, and as such I am not so impartial a judge, but Mr. Monck will tell you that the Deans managed to live here very respectably with £200 per annum. Living anyhow is better than being pestered with calls from creditors. Poor Mrs. Q. says she is in heaven since she *hears** no more the single knocks at the door. You have here all the English books and newspapers that you *would** have in a public library at Bath or Cheltenham, and need not *lose** a word of print if you do not like it. Give our best regards to Mrs. M. and our love to dear Miss Mitford, and believe me most sincerely yours, DE ST. QUINTIN.

M. ST. QUINTIN *to* DR. MITFORD.

Paris, May 16, 1820.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I did not answer sooner your letter of the 13th of April last, because I was in daily expectation to hear from you in answer to the letter I gave to Mr. Monck for you, the contents of which I read and explained to him. As this has not been the case, and I have not heard a syllable from you, it behooves me to give you the information you require. I can make many allowances for your feelings and for the pressure of circumstance that weigh you down. Nobody feels more and sympathizes more with you than I do. Yet there are limits to everything. And since

* These words are put in; the original is torn.

your mind is impressed with feelings on my account that you cannot either reconcile *with friendship or integrity*, since you believe Monsieur de Chabannes, who never spoke a word of truth in his life, in preference to me, it is high time that something conclusive and definitive should be done in this unpleasant affair, for too long have I been represented to your family as the cause of your ruin, and out of mere friendship to you have I suffered this impression to remain on the minds of Mrs. and Miss Mitford, whose good opinions I always valued, and still value very highly. It is, therefore, with much pleasure I shall see your friend, to whom I shall be happy to give every information and every explanation in my power. In the meanwhile I send you the name of our adversary and the names of the attorneys, as you require it.

With best regards to the ladies, believe me, in spite of everything, most truly yours, DE ST. QUINTIN.

DR. MITFORD *to* M. ST. QUINTIN.

Shinfield, near Reading, June 12, 1820.

DEAR SIR,—I have received both your letters: the first by my friend Monck—in answer to which I deny you have any claim against the estate of the Marquis de Chabannes, for I paid the £300 which you say you paid. Perhaps it may have escaped your memory that you wrote me from Paris a strange letter respecting this very money. I have not, however, forgotten it. You had not the means of raising that sum at that time.

I can likewise prove that you won upwards of £2000 of General Hompesch, when you wrote me you had not; in consequence of which you had from me upwards of £100, according to the agreement you forced upon me. If you had been paid by General Hompesch I was entitled to £300 —this you know. You engaged to pay the difference of my loss with Madame Eonbleon, and I paid both principal, and, I fear, more interest than was due to her, with Mr. Corbett's bills; and you know I am entitled to be paid my loss and expenses respecting the money you paid Mr. Corbett, which ought to have been paid to Mr. Aubery. The loss I sus-

tained by your not paying this properly amounts to upwards of £60, and with the deposit, which you had for my brother, makes a very considerable sum.

Now I come to a very extraordinary business. In the account of Messrs. Robins I find several hundred pounds said to be paid to you; this, of course, requires your seeing the statement. I have no knowledge of many of the sums.

I have written this in perfect temper, and am ready for any explanation: but this must take place. It is a very remarkable circumstance that you admitted before the marquis and myself that there was property to the amount of £1400 in dispute: you afterwards stated it at £1200, and in your last letter you make it £1000. How can this be?

With kind regards to Mrs. St. Quintin—dear Mrs. St. Quintin, I remain yours, G. MITFORD.

P.S.—I have not to a human being stated the contents of this letter. I will leave the whole to Monck.

M. ST. QUINTIN *to* DR. MITFORD.

Paris, July 21, 1820.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—When I received your letter of June 12th, I was very ill in bed with an inflammatory fever of a dangerous nature, which was succeeded by a severe fit of the gout, from which I am not yet free. Its perusal gave me a most painful sensation, and, therefore, I perused it but once; nor did I consider it as requiring an answer farther than obeying your injunctions of not making any compromise with the person who disputes us the £1000. This I have done, though much against my will. The law must, therefore, take its course, and most likely it will be a very long, and, for a certainty, a very expensive, course. If I have stated to you that there were £1500, not in the French funds, but in security, it was because Chabannes told me so; but I told you since this sum is reduced to 24,000 francs, which remained on the purchase of Madame de Chabannes's house in the hands of the purchaser to pay an annuity of 1200 francs to an old priest, the old woman's confessor—by

Chabannes I understood at one time that there were two old maids. This priest has now been dead one or two years ago, and I have attached the money in the hands of the purchaser, who, of course, will not pay it until the law will have decided to whom it is to be paid. The letter which Mr. Monck has delivered to you fully explains how the law stands in this respect, and what is for or against you. *How this difference can leave on your mind very unpleasant conjectures attended with feelings most acute*, I am at a loss to conceive, unless you suppose that I reduced the £1500 to £1000, and put the rest into my pocket. But there are public law documents to prove the whole, which must convince the most incredulous. You have, you say, several hundred letters of mine: I am very glad of it; I am sure they contain nothing but the truth, or, at least, what at that time from the representations of Chabannes appeared to be the truth. I have kept but a very few letters of yours; but among them I find the copies of three important ones I wrote to you, to which I refer you as an answer to the other parts of your two last letters. One of them I wrote to you December 28, 1805, the second, September 23, 1807, and the third, November 16, with no year affixed to it, but from its contents I suppose was written in 1808 or 1809. If you have not those letters, let me know, and I shall send you copies of them. At present I am too much pressed by the post, and I will not defer any longer my answer.

From these letters and the accounts in my hands it follows that you have embarked in that unfortunate concern £2800, and I £700—in the whole £3500; you say now that I had not then as many pence. This may be true; but I had above £7000 of Mr. Slaney's money, and as you would not advance another shilling on Chabannes's account, and I had given my acceptances, I was obliged to pay them, and to reimburse Mr. Slaney I was obliged to return him the bond he had given me for an annuity of £100 settled on my life and Mrs. St. Quintin's. This capital, with profit and interest, has produced the large sum Chabannes owes us. Let me see now how much you have received on account of this sum:

First money received from France.....	£90
From General Hompesch on account of Chabannes.....	1360
From Taylor's money on account of Ravelli.....	192
	£1842*

So that within £1000 you have received back your capital exclusive of profit and interest. Besides, you have received for several years £50 per annum for his bond of £1000. After this statement, which is pretty correct, what becomes of the belief that is entertained against me that I have ruined you by this unfortunate speculation: nobody can be more sorry than I am that I should have induced you to make it. I myself have been prevailed upon since to make two speculations, which have cost me nearly £10,000, and, thank God, every farthing is paid; but I do not lay the blame on those who induced me to make them. . . .

With best regards to Mrs. and Miss Mitford,

Believe me, my dear friend, most truly yours,

DE ST. QUINTIN.

In a final letter St. Quintin assures the doctor that he will do his best to obtain repayment from Chabannes "by threats and persuasion, and by secret influence over his d—d heart."

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* A remarkable calculation for a schoolmaster.

CHAPTER I.

POLITICAL FRIENDS OF DR. MITFORD.—LETTERS FROM MR. SHAW LEFEVRE.—POEM BY MISS MITFORD.—LETTER FROM S. J. PRATT.—LETTERS FROM COBBETT.

THE only advantage which seems ever to have accrued to Dr. Mitford from his extravagance and political activity was that of introducing him, and consequently his daughter, to some of the leading politicians of the day. In this manner they became acquainted with Shaw Lefevre, who lived near them at Heckfield, and represented the borough of Reading. Miss Mitford appears to have known little of this gentleman before her leaving school, but sufficient, nevertheless, to have hoped that he would preside at the race ball, where, on first coming out, she would have to dance with the steward. The doctor, who was fond—not always wisely, as I have heard—of showing off his daughter's powers of writing and recitation, sent Mr. Lefevre from time to time specimens of her poetry, to which there is some allusion in the following letters:

C. SHAW LEFEVRE, M.P., *to* DR. MITFORD.

Spring Gardens, June 18, 1805.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Report, I am aware, is always busy, and has probably by this time conveyed to Bertram House a full, true, and particular account of my indisposition, with all its etceteras. Certain it is that I have had the gout for these ten days past, and that I was during a week of that time confined to my bed at Heckfield. In short, I was in a sad state during the whole of our stay there, and what added to my mortification was the impossibility of adding to the majority against Lord Melville. I do most cordially congratulate you on the event of these proceedings, highly honorable to the Opposition, and also to Lord Sidmouth's friends. The law will now take its course, and I am confident that

justice will be tempered with mercy when the noble peer is brought up for judgment in the Court of King's Bench. You see, I have already concluded that he will be convicted; his own confession is enough against him. I am told he made his case much worse by his defence.

As to your noble friend, the D—— of A——, I hear most serious arguments against his claim; but he has so many votes with him that I suppose he will succeed. The canvass in his favor is irresistible. He has all the ladies of fashion in town on his side, and they leave nothing unturned upon this occasion.

We have little prospect of getting to Heckfield for these next six weeks, and then only with room for half our family; we shall, however, have the use of the kitchen, and hope you and the ladies will participate with us in beans and bacon. As to ragouts, etc., they must be postponed till we entirely open house again. Give our kindest regards, and tell Miss M. that I hope she is not idle at this sweet season for poesy. The muses are never more propitious than in spring. If you come to town, let me know beforehand.

Yours most sincerely, C. Shaw Lefevre.

C. Shaw Lefevre *to* George Mitford, Esq., *Bertram House.*

House of Commons, July 2, 1806.

My dear Friend,—I forwarded your letter to Mr. Ogle yesterday, and will execute any other commission for you in return for the exquisite lines you enclosed on Mrs. Mitford's birthday. Mrs. L. and my wife are delighted with them, and I really think they surpass all Miss M.'s former productions.

I hope very soon to thank her in person for them; at present I have work enough here till our assizes, though some holidays ought to intervene. In the city everything to-day is peace. Mr. Fox is certainly better, but his case is said to be alarming. Excuse haste.

Yours most sincerely, C. Shaw Lefevre.

The poem referred to in the above letter was the following:

TO MY DEAREST MAMMA ON HER BIRTHDAY.

Hail, lovely June! thy genial suns
With plenty crown the smiling land,
The rip'ning fruits their treasures yield,
The beauteous blossoms wide expand.

Fair are the flow'rets Maia boasts,
"The primrose pale, the violet blue,"
But none can match thy lovely rose
Bright sparkling with the morning dew.

Yet not thy brilliant rose, sweet June,
Thy lily fair, thy cistus gay,
Would ever deck my humble song,
Or ever tempt my native lay.

But my lov'd mother's natal day,
This dear, this blooming month has blest,
And all its soft, its genial pow'rs
Are centred in her glowing breast.

Vain were the task her mind to paint,
Her modest, timid genius tell;
Vain were the task to paint that heart,
Where the sweet female virtues dwell.

Yet grant, ye heavenly powers, my prayer!
May bliss in that dear heart still live,
And may she in December's gloom
Taste ev'ry pleasure June can give!

M. R. M.

The following letter is from a man who was opposed to Dr. Mitford in politics, but was a favorite poet with his daughter in her girlish days.* Originally a bookseller at Bath, Samuel Jackson Pratt first attracted notice by a poem entitled "The Tears of Genius, occasioned by the death of Doctor Goldsmith," and he endeavored to imitate the style of that celebrated author. He published "Gleanings" and many other works, and preceded Southey as Laureate. But his name is little known at the present time, and many contemporary critics spoke lightly of "the Gleaner."

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* Speaking of Pratt's "Contrast," she writes: "The poetry is good, the politics are execrable."

S. J. PRATT *to* DR. MITFORD.

10 Tottenham Court New Road, Jan. 4, 1806.

DEAR SIR,—Nothing but the dread I feel of hazarding the appearance of neglecting those to whom I owe respect and gratitude could induce me to take up the pen for any purposes unconnected with the solemn offices which I have been lately called on to perform consequent on the death of Mrs. Pratt, whom I had a few days before her illness gratulated on a redundance of health I neither ever did, nor ever shall, enjoy. We have long been separated for inevitable reasons, as to mere personal intercourse, but we have for upwards of twenty years exchanged the most cordial and confidential amity, both as a habit and a principle. We were gladdened to visit, converse with, and consult each other; and I am now consoled only by reflecting that attention to the sick-chamber, the last pressure of the hand, the latest direction of the will, and the last collected expression of kind remembrance, were given to myself. I remember among my consolements, also, that to me and a dear female relative, Cordelia Skules — the lady who wrote in "Gleanings" and "Harvest Home" under the signature of a Sibyl—devolved the last duties when life was no more.

This communication will, I am persuaded, be to you, as it must be to a great many other friends, a sufficient explanation for delays which were unavoidable; and I do assure you, dear sir, nothing short of such a cause could have withheld me from pouring forth the sensibility of my heart for the very lovely verses your amiable and ingenious daughter has offered to my muse. Thank and bless her for them, and may her talents and virtues be long a blessedness to you and to all who partake her duty or her love! With this prayer, which I do assure you is one of "earnest heart," I subscribe myself, dear sir, her and your obliged and devoted servant,

S. J. PRATT.

Dr. Mitford's friendship with the celebrated William Cobbett commenced at a coursing match,* and was increased by

* Dr. Mitford met Cobbett while on a coursing expedition near Alton,

the doctor's appreciation of the Olympic games established by Mr. Cobbett at Botley. There was also much political sympathy between them, and the families eventually stayed on visits at each others' houses. Cobbett's letters reflect his character. On one side we see the ardent lover of the country, the sportsman, and horticulturist; on the other the political combatant, the giant wielding the club, and dealing heavy blows upon his antagonists. It will be best to give his letters without omissions, so as to retain all the force of his style, and the characteristics of the period in which he lived.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, November 17, 1807.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—To go to Hilsley will, I foresee, be impossible for me, unless I most shamefully neglect my most important concerns—namely, those of planting. The keeping off of the frosts kept the leaves so long on that I have not been able to stir a plant until within these two days; and at the very soonest I shall not be able to get done what I must see done before the end of this month. I need not say how much it vexes me; but so it is, and I cannot help it. If I were to neglect this most essential concern, I should never forgive myself. To give you a specimen of my seriousness in these matters: I stopped at Ludgershall, in the rain too, to gather the seed of an ash-tree (the only one with seed that I have been able to find this year); and, after much difficulty, did, with the aid of the parson's ladder, fill a sack full, which sack I tied before our knees upon the gig, and thus we took it to Botley, to the no small amusement of those who saw us pass, and to my great satisfaction; for I can even now hear of no ash-tree in the country which has borne seed this year. After having taken so much pains with my plants, I cannot bring myself to risk the loss of them, and therefore I hope you will consider my absence

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gave him a greyhound, and invited him to another coursing meeting near Reading. The Mitfords were introduced to a variety of company at Cobbett's house, "from the earl and countess to the farmer." Miss Mitford gives an amusing account of an encounter at Cobbett's between Mrs. Mitford and a lady to whom the doctor had once been engaged.

from Hilsley as absolutely unavoidable. . . . Mrs. Cobbett and Nancy join me in affectionate remembrances to Mrs. and Miss Mitford. God bless you.

WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, December 13, 1807.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—My wife is much better, but is not well. . . . Give me some news about dogs. D—n politics! Is Snip with pup yet? a matter of far more importance than whether the Prince of Asturias be hanged or not; or whether his silly father be in a madhouse; or what grenadier is the gallant of his old punk of a mother. We are well set to work truly, to pester our brains about these rogues! It matters not a straw to us whether Napoleon hang them all, or send them a-begging. And as to our fellows at Whitehall and Westminster, we shall be sure to do right if we hate them all. Lefevre indeed, as far as the spaniels go, is of some importance; and, though he has played you foul, I hope he will live till we have got that more valuable part of the creation out of his hands.

Miss Mitford, you owe Nancy a letter, and she is not of a vein to suffer herself to be defrauded with impunity. So pray make haste and pay her. Let it be a letter about all manner of things but politicians and fashions, which are the silliest things now going.

When I send about dogs (which are always the main subject) I will send you some seeds by way of episode. God bless you.

WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, January 13, 1808.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot indeed imagine how the letter should have miscarried. I shall get rid of three at least of my dogs, and shall be ready to receive, with many thanks, those which your goodness intends for me; but of those which already exist, give me leave to say that it will by very desirable (if attended with no inconvenience) that they should have the distemper first. The spaniels I should

very much like to have; but I will put up with the want most cheerfully rather than subject you to anything disagreeable in the obtaining of them. I was extremely sorry to hear of Mr. Webb's misfortune; and, when poor Nancy heard that the beautiful blue bitch was amongst the dead, she could hardly refrain from crying.

I have been frequently out; but our sport has not frequently been good. I wish you and Mrs. and Miss Mitford a happy New Year, and in this wish I am cordially joined by my wife, and daughter, and boys. James always hears what you say of him, and always spreads your fame amongst those who do not know you, and to whom he prattles. As far as I can now judge, he will be just such another fellow as myself; and, were it not too much to indulge the hope of, I would fain flatter myself that he will cause the *Register* to live when the first author of it shall mingle with his native dust. As we proceed in life, the objects of our pursuits and our enjoyments change; the change proceeds as we proceed towards the grave; and, even in our last moments, there is, in general, something to comfort us. Yet do the mass of mankind talk of the Author of this wise scheme as if he were no better and no greater than a partial politician. Poor James has led me into this digression, who is now at the other end of the table, making scratches upon paper, which he calls "drawing," quite unconscious. Nancy has received Miss Mitford's letter, which she will answer very soon. I know not when we shall stir from this place; for, as to London, I hate it with a fervency equal to that of Saint Francis towards the devil. I remain always most faithfully yours,

WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, May 13, 1808.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for your letters, and beg you will excuse my not answering them sooner. The truth is, I have been so constantly engaged between my *Register* and my timber-cutting that I have not had a moment to spare. I have succeeded in shutting up my footway, and I have now one hundred and fifty acres of woods and corn-

fields, into which no one but myself has a right to enter. The water bounds it on two sides, the Titchfield Road on one side, and I can easily make an impassable fence on the fourth. Here I will, if I live, have a stock of hares and pheasants. The timber will be cleared out, and all will be as tranquil as possible. I shall this fall have my laborers' cottages here and there all round it, and I will not suffer man or dog to enter for the purpose of sporting till I have well stocked it. The rest of my land on the other side of the Titchfield Road (now about two hundred and fifty-six acres) I will sport upon, and it, which consists two thirds of covers, will soon be well stocked too. There will be no coursing amongst these coppices; but it will be pleasant to have plenty of hares; and I dare say I shall get some one to give me a few brace of young ones. . . . If Snip be ready, I will send for her, with my best thanks to Miss Mitford, for whose sake I will take particular care of her. In a parcel to the care of Mr. Wright (with directions to send it to you immediately) I this day send some Indian corn. It must be sown in pots, in a hot-bed, two seeds in a pot, suffered to get four inches high, and then be planted out at four feet asunder, in good ground and a warm situation. . . . We are very sorry to hear of the death of a friend; but you and I must be clay again, and it is useless to repine. While life lasts, however, let us be kind to one another, and amongst the objects of our kindness we beg you to be assured that there are very few indeed that have the precedence of you and Mrs. and Miss Mitford. Yours faithfully,

WM. COBBETT.

P.S.—I am flattered by what you say about my *public letter*. Nothing was ever more *read*, I believe; and I am not without hope that it will produce some effect. I may be a very illiterate fellow; but I certainly am more than a match for all those pretenders to learning and philosophy. There is a d—d cant in vogue, which, when attacked by plain sense and reason, discovers its weakness.

The commencement of the following letter refers to a visit the Mitfords were about to pay at Botley.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, August 29, 1808.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Be it then on the 19th of September; but on one account I regret the postponement, and that is, that we shall have little or no Indian corn or melons which we have had and have now in an abundance so great, or to make it a shame for us not to have made some money of the latter. I have actually cut one hundred and twenty pounds' weight of melons. Those remaining would weigh nearly as much, and the corn is full as fine as ever I saw in Pennsylvania. The summer has been fine, to be sure, but I verily believe that my mode of culture, and my man Robinson's, surpass all modes and all men in this kingdom. The pheasants are all well, both nids, and I have great hopes of success in stocking my woods.

The two Yorkshire pups are completely recovered and doing exceedingly well. If the one comes from Northumberland, I shall be glad to have it; but beyond that (except the two pups of Fawn) I have no desire for more dogs of any sort, and have only to thank you for your new and obliging offers. I care little about the color of the dog puppy. Choose you for me. They must be good, be their color what it may. I will try the yeast when the hour of necessity comes. Well, we saw Fonthill, but, even if I had the talent to do justice to it in a written description, ten such sheets as this would not suffice for the purpose. When I see you, I will at times give you an hour's account of it. After that sight, all sights become mean until that be out of the mind. We both thought Wardour the finest place we had ever seen, but Wardour makes but a single glade in Beckford's immense grounds and plantations. The grass walks at Fonthill, fifteen feet wide, if stretched out in a right line, would reach from there to London, upwards of ninety miles; there are sixty-five men and ten horses constantly employed in the pleasure-grounds, a thousand acres of which, being the interior and more private part, are enclosed with a wall of squared stone from ten to twelve feet high, with an oak palisade at top pointed with iron. Scarcely

any soul is permitted to enter here, and, from what we had heard, we had not the least expectation of it; but Johnstone insisted that, if I wrote a note, we should get admittance, and we did. But not to see the house, which no one as yet has seen the inside of. The outside we approached very near, and, like the rest, it sets description at defiance.

After all, give me Fairthorn, and the hares, and the pheasants when I can get them. *Apropos* of the hares, when I read the account of poor Lord Clanricarde's death, "There," said I, "expired the hares of that country." I have met Poulter (whose name should receive the addition of an *er*), who, you know, is a parson, brother-in-law of the bishop, prebendary of Winchester, rector of four parishes united into two, a chaplain of the bishop, a commissioner of taxes, and a justice of the peace. But you know him. This fellow met me as I was coming from Robinson's (whose poor wife is very ill indeed), and he spake me thus: "Mr. Cobbett, I am happy to meet you. I was just telling the farmer (a sly-looking fellow who was with him) that of the two manors of Eaton and Stoke (adjoining that of Warnford) myself and Sir Thomas Champneys (a famous cuckold) have now got the deputations from the Chapter of the college in consequence of the death of Lord Clanricarde, who kept them unjustifiably to himself. And we mean that that tyranny shall no longer be exercised, but that any gentleman or farmer shall take their pleasure upon them when they please." Oh, d—d Levite! thought I to myself, so you would fain persuade me that I shall have better sport when the farmers have killed the hares, and you have stuffed your hoggish parson's guts with them, than I had when they were preserved and when the whole neighborhood was stocked with them by my Lord Clanricarde? I was a base dog for not telling him this; but my wife was with me, and the thing was sudden. I leave you to guess (the manor of Warnford being closely circumscribed by these manors) what a chance the poor hares will now stand. By the 1st of October there will not be a brace left alive in these manors, and then, there being no one at Warnford House, rush they go, the pot-hunting crew, into that manor, and the hares will be heard

squeaking like rats on the breaking-up of a wheat-mow. Oh, d—d prebendary! thy maw will now be crammed, and sportsmen may hunger and thirst over the barren downs. What a base dog to curry favor with the rascally curmudgeons of farmers by these means!

This is truly an unfortunate event. Nobody will feel the effects of it more than I shall. Robinson will feel it too, but not so severely as I shall. Do you know the proprietor of *Crawley?* That is a fair place, and plenty of hares are within reach of us when you come. A couple or three days there are worth a month elsewhere. Cannot you get leave for Highclere? If so, we could have a good day or two there, at any rate. Mrs. Cobbett begs the ladies to accept her kindest regards, to which you will please to add those of

Your faithful and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, October 10, 1808.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—This is a letter of *deaths*. The pup from Yorkshire, the smallest of Cox's spaniels, and the three you bought me last are *all dead*, in spite of care and pains infinite. I do assure you that I am absolutely unable to encounter the chance of seeing this misery and suffering again. The piteous looks of the poor little things pierced my very heart. Another puppy under four or five months old I will never have again as long as I live. If you have got the spaniel dog puppy for me, and will be so good as to put it to any one to keep, I will gladly pay for it; I mind no expense, but upon my soul I cannot bear the anxiety and mortification. It is really making a positive addition to the miseries of life. The pain outweighs the prospect of pleasure, and oh! how many times, while the poor little, tender things were moaning, did I reproach myself with being the cause of their unmerited sufferings. We have *no right* thus to punish any living creature. How is Miss Mitford's *eye?* We are very anxious to know, and pray most heartily that ere this it may be well. I do hope that you will all come as soon as it is recovered. Though we shall no longer have a

warm *sun*, I showed you ample means of having a warm *fire*, and you will have something still more cheering, as warm a welcome as heart ever gave. God bless you.

WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, October 16, 1808.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was yesterday at Winchester, where I learned, with some surprise, that there was a requisition going on for a meeting, on the part of Sir Thomas Miller and others of a pretty good stamp. Lord Folkestone will be at your meeting, and I hope you will carry the thing with a high hand. The king's answer to the address of the Londoners is the most insolent thing of the kind that any King of England ever did. But do not they deserve it? Ay, that they do. He has three hundred thousand red-coats to keep us down. Why should such a king be at all delicate? As long as the Londoners flattered him it was all very well; but the moment they attempted to advise, they got a good snap. Well, we deserve it, and ten thousand times more at his hands. The nation is a base, rascally crew, and he knows it. Has he not three million of droits of Admiralty now in his pouch? Has he not done act upon act that I need not point out to you? Is he not exempted from the Income Tax? Well, then, who can blame him? Snails should be trod upon. Smash them, old fellow, they deserve it all. Ay, and they will love you the better, too. Oh, what a base and degenerate nation! Do you feel any great anxiety about the result of this war for Ferdinand? I do not, and do not care which way it goes. I said from the very first that our people dreaded nothing so much as to see freedom established in Spain. We are now fighting against freedom as much as we are against Bonaparte. We are taking a part in the war with a view of preventing the *people* of Spain from giving an example to the *people* of England. This is the real motive. All the rest is sham. We are spending our money and our blood for the old race of kings against the people. We deserve to be treated like dogs, and like dogs we are treated. Adieu. Faithfully yours, WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, November 8, 1808.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—By heaven, I cannot leave here! This is the very time when my exertions are most wanted, and though this base nation has no fair claims upon any exertions of mine, or of any other disinterested man, I cannot go a-coursing and see the people cheated and abused without an effort to open their eyes. The Court of Inquiry is the greatest of all humbugs, and I must endeavor to make it seem what it is. Adieu. WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, January 22, 1809.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have waited to be able to give you certain intelligence of our movements.

26th. We go to Oxford.

27th. Remain there.

28th. Call at your house, and perhaps sleep.

29th. Return to Botley.

Depend upon nothing as to time of day. A dish of tea will always do for my wife, and a hunch of bread and cheese for me.

I *feed* my wild pheasants in the woods. Shall I get the pied ones? Our kindest respects to Mrs. and Miss Mitford. God bless you and d—n the minister. WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, March 16, 1809.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I shall be delighted to see the dogs in a picture, but, as to you, I like better to have you in a "tangible shape." . . .

I send by the man:

Eighteen Chinese roses.

Four tree carnations.

Twenty white pinks.

Twenty pheasant-eyed pinks.

They must all be put in rich soil, mixed up with some rotten dung, and in a good aspect. The pinks are the finest

by far that I ever saw. I had several of the latter that measured, when put on a card, four inches over; but, to keep them to their size and beauty, they must be piped every year. . . .

The duke will go notwithstanding the powers of corruption. Indeed, to send him going is the only chance that corruption has left. It is a strange scene! Coke's speech is the best of all. I thought he was too far gone in the whiggism to be worth a farthing. I have worked like a horse at this affair. If the cause does not triumph, it will not be my fault. I shall owe the duke nothing, at any rate.

I am sincerely yours, WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Botley, January 7, 1810.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter of yesterday is greatly important to me. If you have occasion to write to me again on the same subject do not write your friend's name at full length; and, indeed, if you say, "my friend," it will be better than putting even the initial; for the d—d rascals see all our letters inside as well as out; or, at least, they have the power of doing it. I propose going to London in the last week of this month, when of course I shall remain there until the thing is over. Write me a line to say whether you shall then be in town. Your being there will be a most agreeable thing to me, besides the real important service it may be of. Mark well! Say nothing about the matter anywhere. The success of all our preparatory measures depends almost entirely upon our being close. All that truth wants is fair play, and I hope we shall get that. I beg my kindest regards at home, and am sincerely yours,

WM. COBBETT.

WM. COBBETT *to* MISS MITFORD, *Bertram House, Reading.*

London, March 18, 1810.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Your good and kind father has just given Nancy a copy of a little volume of poems, in which I find the verses on Maria's winning the cup at Ilsley inscribed to me, and for which honor I beg you to accept of

my best thanks; an honor which I value the more because these verses are in company with those elegant and truly pathetic strains, addressed to your dear mother, which, unlike most other poetical effusions of praise, contain nothing but what is founded in truth.

Mrs. Cobbett joins me in kindest remembrances to Mrs. Mitford, and she begs to be as kindly remembered to you. My prose-writing daughter will thank you for herself in her own way. I am your faithful friend,

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Miss Mitford speaks of Cobbett as "a tall, stout man, fair and sunburnt, with a bright smile, and an air compounded of the soldier and the farmer, to which his habit of wearing an eternal red waistcoat contributed not a little." Some of the reviewers twitted her on her admiration for him, and said she derived it from her father. This she jealously denied. In politics she was no doubt led by her surroundings, but Cobbett's love of animals and of country life would always have awakened her sympathy, even if he had not been a man of genius.

A dispute between Mr. Cobbett and another gentleman, in which Dr. Mitford became involved, separated the families. Miss Mitford nevertheless continued to admire his talents, though admitting his violence, and spoke highly of his endearing domestic qualities. "Milder thoughts attend him," she writes; "he has my good wishes, and so have his family, who were, and I dare say are, very amiable, particularly his very plain, but very clever and very charming eldest daughter." This lady is still alive, and retains all the qualities attributed to her by Miss Mitford except the first.

CHAPTER II.

LETTER FROM S. J. PRATT.—LETTER FROM THE REV. J. MITFORD.—"THE POETICAL REGISTER."—LETTERS FROM R. A. DAVENPORT, J. P. SMITH, AND LORD HOLLAND.—WESTON GROVE.

WE now begin to lose sight of Dr. Mitford and his political importance, while the talent of his daughter becomes more conspicuous. From her early years he had endeavored to awaken an interest in her, and, much against her will, to exhibit her as a sort of infant prodigy. Now, when his extravagance was producing its results, and the sinews for party warfare were failing him, he sought to obtain consideration, if not fortune, by means of her poetical gifts. Almost the only persons of distinction with whom he henceforth corresponds, though not himself a man of study, are authors and editors, and the subjects of discussion are the merits of his daughter's literary compositions.

S. J. PRATT *to* DR. MITFORD.

10 Tottenham Court New Road, October 2, 1810.

DEAR SIR,—Your kind present came at the end of a long illness, and of more than as long deep application in preparing for the press my forthcoming poem (the last of length I shall ever offer to the public) on the deeply interesting subject of Lord Erskine's Bill and "speech" to prevent wanton cruelty to animals; and in course of the notes I have taken occasion to illustrate the arguments, or rather the descriptions, by a quotation from your neighbor Dr. B——'s excellent sermon on bull-baiting.

Your daughter's very amiable and interesting book is quite a refreshment to my spirit, wearied on the one hand by labor and on the other by pain; for it would be in vain to tell you how I have occupied my mind on the beforementioned theme, and this was the very volume to lead me

sweetly and softly from myself to many charming scenes, conducted by the hand of virtue and genius. Where all are amiable, it is hard to select, but the poem addressed to yourself (page 70), and that part of the "Epistle to a Friend" which continues the subject beginning with the line, "How true the wish, how pure the glow," to the end of the passage, went nearest to my affections.

And now I want to interest your benevolence and repay your bounty by making you acquainted with the specimens of a most extraordinary young man, who is author of the accompanying volume of poetic specimens, which I have edited. Dr. Valpy, who thinks very highly of him, contributes his guinea, but I wish you to withhold yours till you have seen, read, marked, and understood their merits. I told you some of the truly affecting points that attach to the very interesting and, I fear, dying young bard, who has been the object of my tender and, alas! unavailing care for near a twelvemonth, and is meeting honor and golden opinions from all sorts of people, and everything but health, which is worth them all. My illness and literary occupations have thrown me deeply in arrears of engagement for most of the present week, and towards its close I am going for change of air to my friend Mr. Dallas's and some other families in Chelsea; but I will assuredly make my first long walk in the course of that time to Mount Street, in the neighborhood of which I owe almost as many visits as a fair lady after an accouchement—with whom, indeed, I assimilate just now, as my muse has recently been delivered, and I ardently hope, for the sake of my poor brutes whose cause I advocate, it will not be a labor in vain. . . . Requesting you will express my sensibility of Miss Mitford's goodness to me, I am, dear sir, Your obliged and obedient,

S. J. Pratt.

Rev. J. Mitford *to* Dr. Mitford.

Benhall Parsonage, Saxmundham, February 4, 1811.

Sir,—I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of a volume of poems which Messrs. Longman transmitted to me a few days since, and for which I am indebted to your politeness.

I have been very much pleased with Miss Mitford's poems generally, and many passages I think excellent. In particular I was delighted to see her muse busy in Northumberland, the scenery of which in many parts is well worthy of a poet. The counties near London are now become almost its suburbs, a circumstance which is of considerable disadvantage to some of our old poets, particularly to Thomson and Akenside, whose favorite spot was Richmond Hill—a place that will not, I suppose, be again celebrated in verse till the revival of the City Laureateship. Miss Mitford seems peculiarly to excel in descriptive poetry, which, after all, is the poetry that pleases most and clings closest to the mind. For myself, I would give whole pages of Dryden and Young for one of Milton or of Cowper.

I beg my best wishes for Miss Mitford's success, and if anything should lead you or your family to Suffolk, I hope you will do me the favor of not forgetting my address. I am, sir, Your obedient servant,

J. MITFORD.*

The Mr. Davenport who indited the letters† next in order was a prolific author, wrote a continuation of "Mitford's History of Greece," a "History of Biography," and other works. He was also the editor of an intermittent periodical called the "Poetical Register." Dr. Mitford generally carried about in his pocket a bundle of his daughter's poems for the benefit of friends or chance acquaintances, and certainly took every opportunity of producing them, though her statement that his "charming manner" was their principal recommendation must have been a fond delusion. In this

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* This gentleman, the Rev. J. Mitford, was a cousin of Miss Mitford and a literary man. He wrote a volume of poetry, and contributed the lives of the English poets to the Aldine edition. Several classical works in the British Museum are enriched by his MS. notes. In the "Village of Palaces" there is an interesting account by him of old-fashioned gardens. Strange to say, he wrote in the *Quarterly* an unfavorable critique on Miss Mitford's poems.

† Mr. Davenport's letters are beautiful specimens of caligraphy, being written in a clear, minute, round hand worthy of an engraver.

way Mr. Davenport became acquainted with Miss Mitford's poetical talent, and he determined to make use of it to brighten the pages of his *Register*, which, although supported by such names as Scott, Moore, and Milman, was somewhat insipid and uninteresting. It was tinged with classical pedantry, and abounded with lackadaisical sonnets, in which mournful swains apostrophized their mistresses under such titles as Chloe and Myra; but it was not unfavorably received in its day.

R. A. DAVENPORT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Twickenham Common, January 17, 1811.

DEAR MADAM,—It has been said by some snarling cynics that ladies have a propensity to indulge fears which have no foundation. I do not give my assent to this libel upon the sex; but, if I did, I should certainly quote you as a proof of its justice. You tell me that you fear the size of your packet is calculated to make me repent of my request. Now, never was there any fear (from the first moment when fear was expressed down to the present moment) which was more completely groundless. The plain proof of its being so will be the appearance of all your pieces in my seventh volume. I shall not find it "expedient to throw" a single one of them "on the fire."

I ordered Rivingtons to send Dr. Mitford a copy of the last volume, and I understand they have sent it. I will now give you, as far as I know them, the names of the anonymous contributors.

I believe you are aware that in all cases the letters R. A. D. are the initials of an inveterate scribbler of the name of Davenport. . . . "Moderate Wishes," page 139 —very moderate wishes indeed!—this poem is by Mr. Hodgson,* translator of "Juvenal," and author of "St. Edgar," "Lady Jane Grey," etc. The epigram in page 160 is not from "Montreuil," but from "De Cailly." Sonnet, page 182, is addressed to the eternal pamphleteer and fingerer of the public money, John Bowles. "Why did not

* Byron's friend, and afterwards Provost of Eton.

you put his name, sir?" "Because, madam, in this country truth is a libel!" Ode, page 252, I believe, is by the Rev. J. Owen, of Fulham. "Address to Poverty," page 264, is either by C. Lloyd or C. Lamb. "Mortality," page 275, and the "Death of Joshua," page 475, signed S. F., are, I rather think, two of Southey's early pieces. Ode, page 304, by Mr. Courtier, author of the "Pleasures of Solitude." . . . "The Golden Age" is by the Rev. Dr. Laurence, brother of the late Dr. Laurence.

I have now given you all the names with which I am acquainted. You will find that not many of the correspondents of the sixth volume remain anonymous. I am, dear madam, with respect and esteem,

Your obedient servant,

R. A. DAVENPORT.

R. A. DAVENPORT *to* DR. MITFORD.

Twickenham Common, March 20, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR,—I may say to you as Falstaff says to mine hostess Quickly, "One knows not where to take you." Twice within these five weeks I have been in town, but without being able to find you. Yesterday was the second time of my visiting London. At Russell Street they told me that you had not been in London for the last fortnight; at the Mount the waiter first told me precisely the same story, and then retracted, and said that you were in town, and that he expected to see you in the evening. "Who shall decide when waiters disagree?"

At Rivingtons, during their absence at dinner, I yesterday found a packet and kind note to me dated Monday evening; but whether last Monday, or the Monday before, or the Monday before that, "this deponent saith not." You will see that your packet left me as much in the dark as ever with respect to the question of your being, or not being, in London. The Rivingtons not being visible, I could get no supplementary information upon the subject. By-the-bye, if you wish me to receive within a century anything which you may have to forward to me, never send it to the good folks in St. Paul's church-yard. I may say with much

truth, "Carelessness, thy name is Rivington." In spite of a thousand entreaties to have my letters immediately forwarded, I yesterday found in St. Paul's church-yard no less than five letters buried, and (like dead friends) forgotten among a pile of old bills, orders, etc., etc., in Rivingtons' counting-house.

Many thanks for the composition signed "Arion." You tell me I must not give the name. At present there does not appear that there is any probability of my giving it; and for this irrefragable reason, that you have taken good care that I shall not. Fielding, in "Jonathan Wild," speaking of a jailor, says, "He, first barring and locking the door, took his prisoner's word that he would not go forth." You have locked and barred the door; you have not told me the name of the author.

I have just written to Miss Mitford to thank her for her kindness in sending Dr. Russell's poems, with which I was much gratified, and which I shall certainly insert in my next volume. . . . How goes on "Christina?" I have not heard a single syllable respecting the lady. I hope the paper-maker, printer, etc., are strenuously exerting themselves to usher her into the view, and consequently the admiration, of the public.

I should have made more attempts to see you, but, alas! I have been miserably bound down to my desk, whenever I could sit at it; and have, moreover, been exceedingly ill. I am not now well. A literary man has great occasion to study the Book of Job. I am, dear sir, truly yours,

R. A. DAVENPORT.

The following letter is that above alluded to, in which he thanks Miss Mitford for sending him some of her grandfather's* verses.

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* This Dr. Russell was the man who penned the fanciful proposal of marriage which appears at the commencement of "The Life of Mary Russell Mitford." From a portrait in the possession of the editor, it would seem probable that his personal appearance may have recommended his suit. He was a student of Christ Church.

R. A. DAVENPORT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Twickenham Common, March 20, 1811.

DEAR MADAM,—Dr. Russell's verses are very highly welcomed. I like them very much. There is great simplicity, neatness, and elegance in them. The whole of what you have sent me will find a place in my next volume. I hope that the fund is not exhausted. If not for my seventh, at least for my eighth volume I mean to take the liberty of drawing on the poetical bank of Russell and Mitford, and my experience of your kindness tells me that my drafts will be honored. There is, at all events, one partner in that bank whose poetical funds are inexhaustible.

* * * * *

There is a story told of a little stunted Italian, much, I suppose, about my own age, who, finding some difficulty in mounting his horse, prayed to Our Lady to help him. Having put up his prayer, he made such a vigorous leap that he went *over* the horse, and saluted the ground on the other side. When he got up, he shook himself, and exclaimed, "By Jove! Our Lady has helped me *too much*." But now I think I hear you say, "Well, sir, what does this silly story mean? How do you intend to apply it?" Have patience a moment, my dear madam (patience is a female virtue); have a moment's patience, and you shall know. You have expressed a hope that in the next volume of the P. R. you may meet with the name of a certain rhymer quite as frequently as you did in the last. Now I really think that, when the next volume makes its appearance, you will find yourself in a similar situation with the before-cited Italian. You do not know what you will have to encounter. Besides all the little scrub poems meant to fill gaps, you will find a mortal long epistle, three hundred lines, partly descriptive, partly satirical. Is it not time for you to repent of your unwise hopes, and to exclaim in the words of the poet, "Prayers heard in vengeance by the angry skies?"

To use a familiar phrase, I have a crow to pluck with you. In your beautiful lines on the death of Sir John Moore, there is *one* line which grates discord, not upon my ear, but upon

my mind. You speak of the "slaughtered victims of *degenerate* Spain." Against the justice, or rather the injustice, of this line, I must, my dear madam, enter my strongest protest. It is impossible for me to admit your charge against the Spaniards. Perhaps I am now biassed by a long established prejudice in their favor. I confess that I have long esteemed them for their firmness, their sedateness, their generosity, their honorable scorn of meanness and insincerity. Even their faults have grown out of virtues. The very pride with which they are reproached is the noble failing of a high mind brooding, with a melancholy satisfaction, over the remembrance of happier days and departed glories, which,

"Lost in its *own*, reverts to *former* days."

Never did a Spaniard descend to deal in that fawning insincerity, that smiling ruin, which degrades the character of his Gallic neighbors; never could it be said of him, as of them, that

"Bid him go to hell, to hell he goes."

It is the curse of party that it destroys all candor, all generous sentiment. A party man will allow no merit in any individual belonging to the hostile party. I have often smiled in scorn on reading the attacks of the newspaper oracles of Queen Anne's time upon the great Duke of Marlborough. Those actions and conquests of which we are now so proud, they represented as trifles unworthy of notice. When, under the eyes of the French army, he reduced the fortress of Bouchain, they declared that he had done little more than conquer a pigeon-house. Party is still the same! My prejudices are against the Wellesley family, but I must say that our opposition papers have behaved with a scandalous want of justice to Lord Wellington, who, in my poor judgment, has manifested a high degree of military talent.

I shall break off now. Mercy on us! On looking back I perceive that I have positively written a whole volume of dry, dull politics. Well! so much the better. It is a very wise provision of Providence that every fault produces, in one way or other, its own punishment. You have done

wrong to my favorite Spaniards, and what is the consequence? that you are punished by a tedious letter of remonstrance. Punishment enough, in all conscience! May it induce you to come forward with a palinode! I shall be truly happy to hear a lyre worthy of the subject sounding the praise of Spanish patriotism.

It is time to return home after this fatiguing excursion. I hope that Christina is rapidly advancing in her progress. I anticipate, with great pleasure, her introduction to the public, and am only sorry that it did not take place sooner.

I am, dear madam, with the sincerest esteem, yours,

R. A. DAVENPORT.

This letter seems to have suggested Miss Mitford's poem "Blanch of Castile." Referring to it she writes to her father on March 22, 1811: "I have had a most delightful letter from that delightful man Mr. Davenport; he meant to write to you by the same post, and was much pleased with my grandfather's poems. He accuses me of gross injustice to the Spaniards. I shall try to make amends by writing a poem on a Spanish subject. Perhaps I may do more injustice by my friendship than by my enmity."

R. A. DAVENPORT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Perry Hill, Sydenham, January 8, 1813.

MY DEAR MADAM,—Though we have heard of "Letters from the Dead to the Living," it seems to be pretty well ascertained that dead men do not write letters, and, consequently, this epistle will convince you that I am still breathing the gross and foggy air of this world, which world, as Sterne observes, really does appear to have been made out of the fragments and fag-ends of all the other planets. After all, I don't know that I ought to say "I'm alive," for at best I am only corporeally alive, having been this long while mentally and spiritually dead. You are, therefore, to receive this as a letter from a lump of animated clay, and now you know what you have to trust to. You must certainly have thought that both work and editor were as dead as a door-nail. Indeed, so convinced was I that you would

think so, that I daily expected to see an epitaph either upon the book or the maker of it. But, alas! my hopes were vain ones; not a single "melodious tear" did you give to my supposed untimely fate. However, as I said before and proved, I *am* alive, though not over and above merry; my work too is alive, and, I flatter myself, will give some pleasure. I send you a copy, which you will do me the favor to accept as a very small but sincere token of my thanks and esteem.

If I remember right, you once wrote me word that you were pleased to know the *names* of the *anonymous* writers in the volumes. I will give you a key to those in the seventh volume as far as I can. R. L. E., pages 16, 20, 32, 47, 79, 91, 160, 213, is Richard Lovell Edgworth, whose name must be familiar to you. R. W. W., page 56, is Mr. Wade, a stock-broker. E. C. K., pages 71, 175, is a Mrs. Kerr. W. R., pages 240, 439, is, I believe, Mr. Roscoe. Horace in London, Messrs. Horace and James Smith, authors of the celebrated "Rejected Addresses." These gentlemen are also the writers of pieces with the signatures H. and J. on pages 322, 337, 361, 417, 487, 529, 542. L. A., page 254, Miss Lucy Aikin. Anacreon in Bow Street, page 396, Mr. Dubois. J. M., page 323, Mr. Montgomery. Two heroic epistles, pages 387, 403, Dr. Richard Laurence. Avran, page 533, is either Mr. Hodgson or Mr. Bland, but I think the latter. Now you are as wise as myself.

I am busily employed preparing for my eighth volume, which is to be published *next* May. You laugh! Yes, by heavens you do! In my mind's eye I see you laughing outright, and I think I hear you exclaim, "Ay, my good friend, two years ago you told us the same kind of story with respect to the *seventh* volume, and lo! the seventh volume is, even now, but just published! Well, all this is true—"'tis pity 'tis true, and 'tis true 'tis pity." But *now* I shall do better. Fortunately sinning once does not imply sinning always. I *will* publish in May; that is to say, if I have "all appliances and means." As to means, I must humbly crave you to furnish me with as large a portion of them as you can. Indeed I can prove it, under your own hand, in black and

white, as the vulgar beautifully express it, that you gave me an authority, which has not been revoked, to draw upon the poetical bank of Mitford and Russell. I know the firm to be a rich one, and, therefore, the world ought to "set me down an ass" if I neglected to avail myself of my credit. Really and truly, I speak it with perfect seriousness, you will confer a great obligation upon me by your early aid. My interest and my pleasure both prompt me to a speedy publication of the next volume, and when interest and pleasure combine to stimulate exertion the power must be great. . . . I hope that you are as well, and in as good spirits, as you are wished to be by, dear madam, your obliged friend and servant, R. A. DAVENPORT.

J. P. SMITH *to* MISS MITFORD.

April 9, 1812.

DEAR MADAM,—If I do not answer your letter now, it will probably be delayed till you will justly deem your knight a recreant from his word. I shall not condescend to rate you for your artful flattery in calling me by that wicked nickname, a *genius*, but admit that you are right in believing that there is a sympathy necessary to make a reader of feeling, as well as a writer who can command the feelings. This is true philosophy, and evinces your knowledge of the human mind. With respect to my poetry, I have written but little and published less. I have within me a passion for literary fame, but I have many other passions also; have long devoted myself to the study of the law, which has not been very profitable; and am embarrassed with the cares of providing bread and cheese for a wife and family, from whom I have known nothing but affection and delight mixed with anxieties: I must not, therefore, presume to call myself a poet. I am only an occasional versifier for amusement when a strong fit seizes me, and I can get the strait-waistcoat off. I have written, let me tell you, all my offences in this way—a few odes, some epigrams, some love verses, some election squibs, one satire, two or three translations; planned one tragedy; translated one serious opera of "Metastasio," with songs, which was rejected; have published

three volumes of "Cases in the King's Bench," law reports innumerable from the daily journals; and am now printing a strange book on a subject which has made me mad for some years, and sets all the world mad besides, except you who live retired, and, I hope, will never suffer much anxiety from anything. What is it, say you? 'Tis *Money*. I am actually printing a book to teach the world the nature of money. And you will think me more mad when I tell you that the world seems to me to know less of this than they do even of poetry. I will confess further. Could I write as fast as I could wish, I would now instantly write on two other subjects—namely, the Parish Register Bill and the East India Charter; and I would write to shield from calumny a man whom, as a politician, I dislike—*George Rose.*

Now, my dear little muse of Berkshire, observe how I have severed the order of things. I have placed you, who are as innocent as the sweetest nun that ever graced a cloister, into the chair, and I, who to be seen should be taken as the father confessor, have knelt before you to be *shriven* at the confessional. I have done it to let you see that I am without guile towards you, and that I feel flattered by your confidence. As to the verses you inquire for, the "Ode to Fancy" is in the *Annual Register*, 1806, the one published by Otridge & Co. The "Eclogue of Fox" is in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January or February, 1797, for it was written in December, 1796. The "Life of Fox" was written by me, as well as Pitt's, and I had to flatter both, but, by dealing a little too plainly in telling an anecdote of Lord Carington, I offended one of my employers, and compiled no more for them. My satire was published, but though rather general, as I published myself, I did not advertise. It was little read, and the copies got into the hands of the assignees of my bookseller, who was a bankrupt. It contains, however, some good lines, but very little poetical feeling. I have lent a volume in MS. to a lady, very fairly written out for my wife, and she has forgotten to return it, or I would send it to you.

Let me now change character, and talk to you a little as a critic. I approve of your plan very much, except that I

should like to see "Blanch" published now, in spite of the critics. I would try Longman, or Cadell, or some one who publishes more generally than Rivington. He is the parson's bookseller, and they are rather a cold set of readers, and affect not to like ladies' poetry, and, indeed, to like no lady but our Mother Church. If it could be published with engravings like Scott's "Lay" and "Marmion," so much the better, and there are scenes which would give full scope to the painter's art. The tournament is almost a common scene for a painter; the banishment might make a good scene; the lover at the window in the serenade; so would the fall into the stream, and some other passages. I recommend to publish now because it is a *Spanish Tale*, and the *Spanish* is all the rage — I mean the Spanish taste, not money, which, you know, is vulgarly called "the Spanish." Perhaps next year *Spain* may be our enemy, and *John Bull* may rap against your *Dons* most violently; for John is very fickle, very proud, and very spiteful against all his enemies. I repeat that the Scotch reviewers have done wonders for Campbell and Scott; the former I think rather forced, the latter is a mannerist. The nationality of the Scotch has done all this. Moore writes pretty music as well as loose verses. He is absolutely the Anacreon of demireps; he has therefore a certain sect of his own, independent of all the singers. Now I should recommend you to make a party amongst the ladies, and steal into their hearts through their ears, also by getting some knight or page of musical skill to set some of your songs to music. If you could set up a *Ladies'* review, you would soon beat Scott, or at least ride behind him, or before him, on a pillion or a pillow. By the way, there is an epigram of mine on Moore in a monthly publication three years ago, called the *Cabinet*, new series, and several in the *Monthly Mirror*, signed J. P. S., particularly a legal critique on Shakespeare and Massinger, also "Love's Metamorphosis" in the *Cabinet*.

The story of "Blanch," when the poem becomes fashionable, will be dramatized, and Kemble, who has just learned to ride, will mount the horse, and run a tilt at Young or his brother Charles. I cannot help thinking it would make a

good drama. The story is busy and pathetic. For the two small poems I thank you much. That to Lord Redesdale is most striking to me, and it is a just tribute to feeling where one would least expect it. As I have praised my friend McKinnon's brother, from a public feeling that tells me that praise is but a just tribute to great merit, you do right in cherishing that kind-heartedness which Lord R. has shown by this bill of his, and which I admire the more because men who have cards in courts, and made fortunes by the gainful practice of the law, are apt to have their hearts steeled against misery. It is the proper business of poetry to rouse the feelings, to awaken men to a sense of humanity, to sound the charge that shall animate them in the warfare of life; and, when you do this, you seem to me a little angel, to whom the trumpet of fame has been consigned, for wise purposes and most noble uses, by the hand of a presiding Deity.

What shall I say when you sound the horn in pursuit of the timid hares? What but repeat Collins, who, in his "Ode to the Passions," describes you under the name of Cheerfulness, and says that you

> "Blend an inspiring air that dale and thicket rung,
> The hunter's call to fawn and Dryad known;"

and in truth, my dear madam, you are the prettiest defender of what I have long thought a mere relic of barbarity. But I yield to your genius; I cannot admire cruelty in sport; but, if wild animals must be killed, I know not how they are to be killed with less cruelty than hunting, and giving them a run for it; for catching them in *gins* gives them a lingering death, shooting often wounds without killing, and, as you say, the hare often escapes, and, when caught at last, it is but one of the modes of death. The act of running perhaps bereaves her of pain, and relieves her anxiety with frequent transitions of hope. Is not this a picture of life? Are not we poets hares, and are not the critics dogs, bloodhounds, and all that is horrible to us? and when they kill us, do they not say, "Ha! ha! it is but one of the modes of death?"

Your "Sisters" is marked with the same character as all

your other writings—the same power of description, the same views of nature, the same fluency of style—but it left off just where I would go on. Just as I had worked myself up, and begun to be in love, and to make love as I used to do, you left me, and dissipated all the sweet delusion of your scenery. It is really only the beginning of a poem, and as I had not my pencil in my hand, and did not note the few words that struck me, I shall not at present criticise further than by remarking you have repeated the figure of the diamonds as descriptive of dew-drops, whereas I prefer Collins's *gemm'd* with morning dew as more general, or *brilliants* as a softer word, and that you have used the word *lit* instead of lighted. By the way, let me observe that there is not quite incident enough for your description. Poetry merely descriptive is like mere landscape in painting without figures, or a fine scene in a tragedy, which, when you have gazed on it for a while, you begin to wish for the actors.

Now, as I have, I presume, nearly fatigued you, I must beg you to excuse a hasty scrawl, in parts not strictly grammatical, and subscribe myself, with many thanks in your character as a muse especially, your true knight and admirer, J. P. Smith.*

Miss Mitford dedicated her "Poems on the Female Character," including "Blanch," to Lord Holland in 1813, and, as it appears from the following letter, sent them in manuscript for his approval:

Lord Holland *to* Miss Mitford.

Madam,—I am really ashamed of not having answered your very obliging and interesting letter, and not having acknowledged the receipt of the pretty poem which you have done me the honor of submitting to my perusal. The fact is, I have been confined to my room for several days, and, though I have run through your entertaining MS., I have by no means given that attention to it which it deserves, and which alone would entitle me to give you an opinion upon

* John Pye Smith, known for his works on legal subjects.

it. Indeed, you allow a very flattering partiality for me to overcome your judgment when you ask me for my opinion. I can, from the very cursory perusal I have hitherto made of it, say very truly that it gave me great pleasure, and is both an elegant and poetical work, but it would require a critic more conversant than I can pretend to be with the public taste, and more capable of discerning the true merits and defects of a poem, to decide how far it is likely to succeed greatly with the public, and what slight alterations would tend to defeat the severity of that criticism which uniformly attacks modern productions, especially when they are professed imitations of the most popular writer of the day. The loose metre which Mr. W. Scott has adopted, and which you very naturally follow him in, is unquestionably very favorable to narrative, very convenient to the poet, and very happy for the simple expression of tender sentiments. But it is apt to betray the writer into small inaccuracies, and perhaps it is the best advice one can give to an imitator of Walter Scott to avoid as much as possible his incorrectness in phrases, rhyme, and metre. For these reasons I will, with your permission, keep your MS. for another perusal, and will venture, where an expression strikes my ear as unusual or incorrect, to pass a pencil-mark under it; but, if I do so, I must entreat you not to consider the marks as intended to do more than to bring the expression once more to your notice, as it is at least full as likely that so incompetent a critic as myself should be incorrect in his observations as that you, who have such a command of verse, should be faulty in your expression.

I am, madam, with many acknowledgments,
Your obliged, humble servant, VASSALL HOLLAND.

This third Lord Holland was a distinguished Whig politician. He was Lord Privy Seal in the Administration of All the Talents, and was three times Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. From his early years he was fond of writing poetry, and he published a memoir of Lope de Vega. His partiality for Spanish literature, and perhaps his connection with the Chamberlayne family, led to this dedication of "Blanch."

Miss Mitford's earliest attempts, like those of many authors, consisted of descriptive poems, and were generally addressed to some valued friend. Love of the country gave the charm of Nature to her sketches of rural scenery, and to the last she excelled in that which first attracted her girlish fancy. Birds and dogs, trees and flowers, were her delight, and we now in 1812 find her joyously sketching the beauties of Weston Grove, the country-seat of Mr. Chamberlayne, which she calls,

"A garland on the brow of Time,"

in reference to its overlooking the ruins of Netley Abbey.

Mr. Chamberlayne naturally felt much gratified at the compliment paid him by the young poetess, and wrote as follows to her father:

MR. CHAMBERLAYNE *to* DR. MITFORD.

Weston Grove, near Southampton, Nov. 7, 1812.

DEAR SIR,—Your delightful present reached my hands, I fear, some weeks since, but I was then so much engaged in an election contest, and my whole time since has been so much occupied in business arising out of it, that I am just returned to the enjoyment of my country life, and of those scenes which are only excelled by the beauty of the picture which your accomplished daughter has so kindly given me of them. It is strikingly remarkable that her view of Netley Abbey and its scenery coincides with that of Lord Orford, written in 1755 in a letter to Richard Bentley, Esq., and published in his works. I have not the book at hand, but think I recollect nearly the very words of it: "How," says his lordship, "shall I describe Netley to you? I can only by telling you that it is the spot in the world for which Mr. Chute and I wish—the ruins are vast, and retain fragments of beautiful fretted roofs pendent in the air, and with all variety of Gothic patterns of windows wrapped round and round with ivy. Many trees are sprouted up among the walls, and only want to be increased with cypresses. A hill rises above the abbey, encircled with wood. The fort, in which we could build a tower for habitation, remains with two small platforms. This little castle is buried from the

abbey in a wood, in the very centre, on the edge of a hill. On each side breaks the view of the Southampton sea, deep blue, glistening with silver and vessels; on one side terminated by Southampton, on the other by Calshot Castle and the Isle of Wight rising above the opposite hills; in short, they are not the ruins of Netley, but of Paradise. Oh the purple abbots! what a spot had they chosen to slumber in! The scene is so beautifully tranquil, yet so lively, that they seem only to have retired into the world."

Have the charity to believe that I never meant to compare this sketch of the peer, animated as it is, with the magic of the poetry with which I have been so highly gratified in the finished stanzas on Weston, though the objects seem in some particulars to have presented themselves to both artists in much the same order and point of view.

Would that I was among the number of those whose praise is fame! No, the "Berkshire Muse" has acquired that in the fullest abundance for *herself*, and requires no foreign aid. Have, therefore, the goodness only to express to her my gratitude for the delight which her genius has afforded me, and her kindness in noticing so humble an individual as myself. In most of her representations I scarcely know whether to admire most the fidelity of her portraits or the creative powers of her mind. It is only when she is pleased to speak of *me* that I perceive the triumph of fiction over truth.

Had not the election contest run away with all my treasures, it was in my contemplation to have erected a column of Purbeck or Portland stone to the memory of Mr. Fox, at a moment when it seems forgotten by princes and people. Dr. Parr had kindly written a beautiful inscription in Latin for it, and I should have flattered myself with the hope that it would not have been an unpleasant subject to the feelings of the fair writer of "Weston" to have introduced in a future edition of her incomparable poem; but we must wait for better days.

With best wishes for the health and happiness of yourself, Mrs. Mitford, and the "Enchanting Muse,"

I am, dear sir, your obedient and obliged humble servant,

WM. CHAMBERLAYNE.

Referring to this letter, Miss Mitford writes to Sir W. Elford:

"You are right in supposing Mr. Chamberlayne to be the gentleman who will succeed to the great Dummer property at the death of Lady Holland. Netley Abbey forms part of this demesne; and I suppose its vicinity to the large estate, of which he has so near a prospect, was one reason, joined to its almost unrivalled situation, for his fixing on Weston Grove for the site of his fairy palace."

CHAPTER III.

SIR WILLIAM ELFORD.—LETTERS FROM HIM.—SPECIMENS OF HIS POETRY.—LETTERS FROM J. PERRY AND A. MADDOCKS.

SIR WILLIAM ELFORD was a friend and club-mate of Dr. Mitford, who apparently first met him at Graham's Club, in St. James Street. He was a Tory, and belonged to a good Devonshire family, of old settled at Longstone, among the tors of Dartmoor; and there was a tradition that one of his ancestors had escaped the Roundheads by taking refuge in a cavity of Sheepstor known as the Pixies' house. Personally, the present representative was worthy of the line, for he was created a baronet by Pitt in 1800, and was an M.P., and Recorder for Plymouth.* Moreover, he was a man of taste and cultivation, though but for an occasional pamphlet he did not enter the field of literature. He was fond of poetry and painting, and some of his pictures appeared in the London exhibitions.

Sir William's acquaintance with Miss Mitford seems to have commenced in her father showing him some of her manuscript verses, for his first letter to her was to request that she would send him more of her poems. Her reply was the beginning of a close and remarkable correspondence between the young girl and the elderly gentleman,† from which, though much his superior in talent, she greatly profited. Not only did she receive useful advice from his experience, but she became accustomed to write full and interesting letters, and gradually formed the style for which she was afterwards celebrated. Sir William is occasionally alluded to in her letters to friends. She speaks of his

* He was a partner in a bank in that town.

† He had three daughters, older than Miss Mitford, one of whom became Lady Adams. He lived to a great age.

"having painted nearly every British bird," and of one of his pictures being "destined for an apartment in Carlton House—a present to the Regent." He stayed at one time on a visit with the Mitfords at Reading, and she says that "he talks as much as a woman, and visits everybody in that enormous county. He is the kindest, cleverest, warmest-hearted man in the world." She did not, of course, escape being twitted about her partiality for him, and she adds, "He is perfect in everything but not being in love with me. I shall not marry Sir William Elford; for which there is a remarkably good reason—the aforesaid Sir William having no sort of desire to marry me; neither shall I ever marry anybody. He has an outrageous fancy for my letters, and marrying a favorite correspondent would be something like killing the goose with the golden eggs." Referring to his correspondence, she observes, "There is something of Horace Walpole's mixture of humor and courtliness about his style," and she writes to him on April 22, 1812: "I keep your letters as choicely as the monks were wont to keep the relics of their saints; and about sixty years hence your grandson, or great-grandson, will discover in the family archives some notice of such a collection, and will write to the grandson of my dear cousin Mary (for, as I intend to die an old maid, I shall make her heiress to all my property, *i.e.* my manuscripts) for these inestimable remains of his venerable ancestor." Miss Mitford's letters to Sir William Elford are well known, and we now propose to show the other side of the picture by printing some of his.

SIR W. ELFORD *to* MISS MITFORD.

18 Bury Street, April 9, 1812.

Your letter evinces how little attention ought to be paid to the most positive testimony, and that moss-roses which, when viewed at some distance from the place where they grow, appear to be white, are, on closer inspection, found to be of a maiden blush. Pray, are you certain, however, of this fact? Were not Mr. Swallow's moss-roses white before your approach, and did not the blush proceed from *reflection?* You know that the purest bodies are sometimes suffused by

involuntary reflections of another kind. I hope you consider this all very poetical and pretty; however, I do not mean to let you escape from the trouble I intended to impose on you, and therefore I still beg you will be kind enough, the next time you go to Reading, to direct Mr. Swallow to send by Fromont's coach, to be addressed to me at Bickham, near Plymouth, four of the light-colored moss-roses, and six or eight of the yellow roses, and two or three other cheap plants such as he would recommend, and, among others, some of the evening primrose which has been rendered famous by a certain songstress, and of which we have none in Devonshire. This commission being executed, you will be pleased to favor me with a few lines, enclosing Mr. Swallow's charge. So much for business, in which I make no scruple of employing my good and fair correspondent.

By-the-bye, we are such good friends that there ought to be something of a free communication between us, and I shall inform you of a circumstance that happened to myself formerly, and which is known to very few people in the world. When on my travels, in my younger days, in the upper part of Ethiopia, an event occurred that almost recalls the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" to one's mind. I was pursuing my way on the edge of a forest in beautiful rocky scenery, attended by my servant and a native guide, when, hearing the cries of distress, I pushed forward, and, dreadful to relate, saw an old, venerable-looking man under the paw of a huge lion, which seemed, like all the cat kind (*bathos*), to delight in tormenting its prey before it was put to death. I hastened, like a rash fool, to his assistance, and, with the aid of my two companions, rescued the sufferer by destroying the lion. He was so much injured, however, that I despaired of his recovery, and we had some difficulty to get him into his hermitage, which was situated in a cavity of the rocks very near, where in a few hours he breathed his last. Just before he died he presented me with an invaluable though dangerous gift, the uses of which he shortly explained: it consisted of a small brilliant ball, with curious characters engraven on it, which, when held in the right hand, rendered the possessor invisible, and, in the left, trans-

ported him whither he willed, and had both operations when the two hands joined.

I have seldom ventured to use this wonderful talisman; but a fortnight ago, having employed myself in reading White's "Selborne," and being extremely fond of natural history, and, of course, highly delighted with that book, I was seized with an insuperable desire to see that village which Mr. White has, in the eye of a naturalist, made classic ground, and, using my means, I was presently transported thither, and walked invisibly through the village, the Hangers, the places where the beech woods had been destroyed, and, in short, every part of that scenery which the unaffected language and sterling sense of the author has rendered so interesting. After having satiated my curiosity, I proceeded on my return by slow steps, and first having willed myself in an inn at Alresford (for under the operation of this supernatural power I am subject to extreme hunger), and having made a good repast, I heard the names of Mr. and Miss Mitford mentioned, and, on inquiry, found they were then actually in the town, and were those friends whom I wished earnestly to see. Taking my brilliant in my right hand, I walked to the house of a Mr. Pollen, or Holland, or something very like it, and saw you sitting in a neat little drawing-room alone, sometimes reading, sometimes ruminating; the apartment was hung round with prints of various kinds, and most neatly furnished. You several times in contemplation spoke aloud, unconscious of being observed, and seemed to refer to Lord Redesdale and some poem, which, I suppose, you had lately produced, and which, from some lines you repeated, seemingly with a view to alter them, appeared to me to be exquisitely beautiful. There was one part of your meditations which I could not make out, but which appeared to refer to some thing or person in which you were deeply interested. You sometimes struck me as talking of a donkey,* then of the Mediterranean; from thence I heard something of a Quartermaster-general: in short, all this was like the incoherence of a dream, which is always

* A reference, perhaps, to General *Donkin*. See p. 127.

the case with the waking reveries of those who are unconsciously thinking aloud. I could hardly help laughing at your starting once or twice at a little bustle which my moving occasioned, and once particularly, as I approached so near as very slightly to touch you. The weather was very bad, and I, being wet, was afraid the dripping from my clothes might tend to discover me, for they became visible on the floor, and I was just going out of the room when you said something of a friend of yours, one Maria, somebody to whose expected accouchement you seemed to be looking forward with some anxiety (by-the-bye, I hope she has been confined, and is as well as can be expected in her condition). Your father I saw in the street, more wet than myself, followed by greyhounds, and accompanied by other sportsmen. By the time I returned to Bath I was tired to death, and shall not presently have recourse to my brilliant ball again. This adventure is communicated to you in perfect confidence, and I desire you will not read the account of it to your papa and mamma; but, with my best compliments to them, believe me, my dear Mary's faithful and affectionate friend, W. ELFORD.

P.S.—I fear it is so late that I cannot get a frank to-day. On looking at the fourth side of the enclosed sheet I found it beautifully blotted, but the discovery was too late, so you must excuse it.

The story in this letter is to be explained by the fact that Miss Mitford was at the time he mentions on a visit at Alresford, the home of her childhood, staying in such a room and engaged in such occupations as he describes. He obtained this information, which he ascribes to a talisman, from an accidental meeting with Dr. Mitford.

SIR W. ELFORD *to* MISS MITFORD.

18 Bury Street, Sunday morning, April 19, 1812.

I have just finished your poem of "The Sisters," and tell you truly and fairly that I read it with an interest and delight which I cannot express. I like it better than anything

you have done (am I right or wrong?), and you have contrived to mix up poetical imagery and expression with such a great degree of interest as I have never before found in any poem. Have you invented it all, or have you stolen it, or borrowed it from some known or unknown tale? Not that it signifies. Shakespeare is said to have borrowed some of his subjects, but he made them his own, as you have done. In short, it is, in my mind, quite perfect, with the exception of *two* or *three words*, which I don't like. . . .

Pray, my dear, can you tell me what I have done with your last letter? It is not in my right pocket or my left pocket, and I want to look at it, and can't find it, although I am quite certain that it is very safe somewhere, as I carefully preserve all your letters. Are you sure you have not taken it up?

Your papa was here just now, and swore through thick and thin that the two first stanzas in "The Sisters" are not *quotation*. I, on the contrary, swore in a similar manner that they are so, having " " at the beginning of the first and end of the second; but at last he said they were from a song of your own, so that he was but a little perjured, and I not at all. The thought in them is beautiful, and quite new to me, and you are a dear little Mary, and a great poet, and you are also a little and a great flatterer in admiring my nonsensical talisman. You must know that I tried something like a similar experiment on a young lady (not a correspondent) to whom I had occasion to write about some business last year, and who had just before given a ball, which had been so far described to me, particularly as to a vase which stood in the middle of the table, and a man who appeared particularly attentive to her, as to furnish me with sufficient particulars on which to found a little fiction. She was a very good sort of plain, matter-of-fact person. She answered the business part of the letter, and merely remarked on the other part that I was mistaken in my inferences from the major's attention to her; and I am quite clear that she has ever since firmly believed that I possess an invisible girdle and wishing-cap like Fortunatus, and really appeared invisible at her ball—that's Irish! On

turning the corner, I see my paper is very smutty, for which I humbly beg pardon.

I am very much obliged to you for executing my commission, and for your evening primroses, which I shall prize not a little. Your papa told me you had plenty, but I could not ask for them, as we were then in a plot against you. I had been getting from him some particulars on which to found my talismanic story, and, of course, was not to appear to have seen him, and the letter was also necessarily antedated. Such deceivers are men—take care of them, child. Your papa and I, however, are past being *gay* deceivers.

By the way, I was not a little edified at the exemplary modesty you display in describing your humble and moderate choice of flowers, you having, I think, enumerated all those most admirable in the garden, the wood, and the field. I remember a similar instance of forbearance in a country Devonshire justice, who said that no man was less solicitous for the luxuries of the table than himself—give him a turbot of ten pounds, a haunch of venison, and a green apricot tart, and the devil might take all the beefsteaks and mutton-chops in the world!

SIR W. ELFORD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Bickham, June 18, 1812.

I'll tell you what, young woman, you are a little insidious, flattering gypsy, and want to evince your power of turning my brain by telling me that I can write letters, and that I have made a new observation about hanging madmen. I really believe that in this remark you are very much mistaken—at least, I am not at all aware of the merit of having found out anything new. Did not Cervantes or somebody tell a story founded on the same opinion, and which serves to corroborate it—a madman (mad on that one point, as far as could be discovered) used to amuse himself by walking about the streets of Madrid with a very large stone on his shoulder, and when he came near a dog he always let it fall on his head and crushed it to death. Having one day performed this operation on a favorite pointer, whose master was by, the owner attacked the madman, and gave him a

most severe beating, calling out constantly, "You scoundrel, that's for killing my pointer!" The next day the man, however, betook himself to his favorite diversion, and, having killed a brace or two of dogs, was in the act of letting his stone loose on another, when he suddenly called out, "Oh, that's a pointer!" and immediately desisted. So, you see, the opinion is quite as old as when Don Quixote was living, or at least when his historian was so. Now I have been thinking for at least a minute how to make an easy transition from this to another subject of your letter, and, not succeeding, I must do without it. Women understand this, as well as most other parts of letter-writing, much better than men, and slide from one topic to another without any of those rough jerks occasioned by sudden chasms.*

You talk of curiosity and women being related. I won't allow more curiosity to women than to men, and you only want to establish the fact in order to display the female character. Curiosity is only another name for a thirst of knowledge. 'Tis indeed applied opprobriously by wicked men when coupled with the female character, but very improperly certainly, especially as to the occasion which gave rise to your observation.

My two Devonshire words have done wonders in drawing out so acute and learned a commentary from you. It puts me much in mind of the voluminous commentators on Shakespeare, many of whom would have been spared wonderful pains had they been furnished with a correct copy of the author's performance. I have only one objection to your beautiful and ingenious solution of *daveid*, which I doubt not would have been quite just had the word been so, instead of *daver'd*, which was what I wrote, or meant to write. Perhaps (for you have heard of such a thing) the writing was not quite legible, which was certainly my fault, and not yours. "Daver'd," then, madam, you are to understand, is the participle of a supposed verb neuter, to *daver;* and, joking apart, is with us a very expressive word. A *daver'd*

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* Miss Mitford, when making transitions in her letters, often uses a ∞, and alludes to Sir William's notion of jerks.

flower is in a state between faded and dead; a corruption of *cadaverous*. It is often applied to a person who looks very ill, and very *wishd*, from which *wishness*, or *wishdness*, is derived. A *wishd*-looking man or woman is, in our conception, a poor, miserable, inergetic-looking person; but the substantive *wishness* is applied to things of a ghostly kind which cannot be distinctly described. A *clear* and *well-appointed* ghost, that is a pale representative of some one departed, would be called a ghost; but if any one is scared by he can't tell what, he is said to have seen *wishness*. Have I been able to describe these beauties in our language so as to be understood?

I had not despatched my last letter ten minutes before I recollected that I had not answered your kind query relative to the kind of stanza in which a song would be most welcome. I can only say "in any that you like best." We don't sing much, but whatever you send will be most kindly and thankfully received, and some tune will be adapted to it, or invented for it. I must leave off now, and finish another time. I am called to get into the carriage, and travel seven miles to dinner.

June 24.—From the date of the beginning of this letter, six days ago, you must necessarily have been expecting it for the last four days, and I am really sorry to disappoint you, but you may depend on receiving it within these four days to come, with which promise you will, I know, be quite *aisey;* and so I shall now tell you that I have been in the midst of an election at Plymouth, occasioned by Sir T. Tyrwhitt's having accepted of the office of King's *Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, and Daily Waiter*, for such is his style and title. Colonel Bloomfield* came, and had indeed canvassed before, and a Mr. Longmead, a brewer, had long had his own consent to represent the borough; but as his father had once, by some strange conduct, got into the representation, and afterwards quitted it for a sum of money to Mr. Tyrwhitt, I determined as far as in me lay, as did many others, that the brewer should not *work* for us, and we have made him *hop*

* Afterwards Lord Bloomfield.

off. I hope you do not consider this as punning. I had the honor of proposing Colonel B., and, as he tells me, became his godfather for more than he shall be able to perform; and he was unanimously elected, the other having declined now and forever. The canvassing therefore, the election, the various dinners, and lastly the great dinner on the great day, at all of which I have been assisting, aiding, and abetting, have taken me up so entirely that, although I have not forgotten my dear and good and kind correspondent, I have not been able to consummate my letter, and you see it is swelling in size beyond a single sheet; but that I don't care sixpence about, nor need you do so. The new member shall frank it, and this shall not be the last frank you shall get from him, as I have (*since his election*, which I mention to convince you I was not bribed) made him promise to direct all letters for you which I should send to him, ~~for which~~—I have scratched those words, as I am sure I don't know what they were to lead to. I should add that Bloomfield is a very old friend of mine, or I should not have made such a proposal.

Apropos to Colonel Bloomfield (he is an Irishman), I have been, and am now, in the midst of reading Miss Edgeworth's 4th, 5th, and 6th vols. of "Tales of Fashionable Life." I don't enter into disquisitions about whether they come up to or fall short of her other works, but I am most highly entertained with them. Such admirable delineation of character and such excellent tendencies one seldom sees; and her stories are interesting, not from intricacy of plot, but from exact representations of Nature; and she has now and then evinced an extraordinary power—at least, so it appears to me—that of inventing a new character, and of marking it by making the person act so as he or she would act, with such propensities and objects as she attributes to him or her, in the situation in which they appear. Have I made myself comprehended, for I have expressed myself rather confusedly? In short, this is the female age, the men are beaten hollow by you; confound you all for your insolent usurpation. But let me rather say, God bless you all for the fund of delightful entertainment I find in your writings. Do tell me

whether you have ever met with a novel called "Anne of Brittany;" 'tis not of a high class, and is an historical story, but I know the author, and want your opinion. Have I anything else to say at this time? I am writing before breakfast, for you must know that I am a farmer, and an early riser. Remember me most kindly to your papa and mamma, and think me, as I am, most affectionately your friend,

W. ELFORD.

SIR W. ELFORD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Nov. 1, 1812.

Did not you say something of your being a little of a democrat? I fancy you was once a good deal so (now can't I tell whether that's a provincialism or no?), but, like all other people of good-sense, observation and experience render you otherwise; at least, it makes you think it necessary to appear otherwise. Now pray, Mademoiselle Democrate, what do you think of M. Bonaparte's situation? Is he on a bed of roses, or on a Moscow gridiron with the city cinders under him? Pray, as you are a well-wisher of his, desire them to put some pepper and salt—for a man like him should, in no state of his life or death, have any mawkishness or insipidity. Do you think he can return in post-chaises to Paris as usual, unless his army escorts him back? Come, tell me what you think.

Miss Mitford seems to have profited by the following advice:

SIR W. ELFORD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Bickham, Nov. 25, 1812.

I sit down to begin a letter (to be finished as occasions offer) to my dear, good little correspondent, and to thank her for the long and most entertaining one I have lately received from her. Pray never refrain from writing much *because you want time and inclination to read over what you have written.* I would a thousand times rather see what falls from your pen naturally and spontaneously (that is, in a letter) than the most polished and beautiful composition that ever went to the press; and so would you, I doubt not,

from your correspondents. Upon this subject some very fine and trite sayings might be uttered, such as how infinitely more beautiful to a naturalist (which I pretend to be a little of) is the ore in its native colors and crystallizations than the most polished state to which the pure metal can be brought.

SIR W. ELFORD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Dec. 4, 1812.

Pope's maxim (if it is his) that "easy writing is not easily written" is certainly true with respect to what is intended for the world as composition either in prose or verse, but is utterly false as applied to familiar letter-writing, of which his own letters—pretended to be warm from the brain, but in reality polished and revised for publication—are a striking proof. Write away, then, my dear, as fast as you can drive your quill, and abuse Miss Seward as much as you please; she deserves it for her abuse of our friend Dr. Johnson. Shall I tell you that you are a little like her in one respect—that is, you carry your censures on her to as great an extent as she does hers on Dr. Johnson; but then you do it in the proper place and in the right direction. I am called to breakfast, and when I begin again (an interval of time having passed) I shall not need a mark of jerkification on commencing a new subject.

Dec. 5.—As this threatens to be a double letter, it will wait for a frank, though I hope not long. You do yourself but justice in believing that you are in no danger with me of being charged with writing Miss-Nonsense about peace (observe Miss is spelt with a double *s*, and is not used as in misconduct, misfortune, etc., etc.), but still I must make a few observations. That peace in the abstract is better than war nobody can deny; in the same way as health is better than disease, or as plenty than privation. But what are the *great* trials and miseries (by great I mean extensive) of this world but war, pestilence, and famine? They have been so from the earliest ages of history, and, while mankind continues as they are, will occur to the latest. Nay, according to the course and construction of the animal world, they *must* occur. All animals but men have some

others that prey on them, by which means the natural tendency to inordinate increase is kept within due bounds, in the manner that wars keep down the human species. All animated nature is checked also by the other two causes—namely, disease and want of food. Now, dreadful as I allow wars to be, and dreadful as it must be to be eaten by larger animals, I freely confess that I should prefer those modes of extinction to disease and famine. The history of China within the last century affords a striking proof of the effect of the absence of wars. Since the Tartar Conquest, and the establishment of the dynasty of which the great Emperor Cham-Hi (I believe that is the way the gentleman spelled his name) was the founder, the population has been very little exhausted by wars; but what has been the consequence? That several times (during the space of a few months' continuance each) famine, followed, of course, by pestilence, has swept off as many millions as one of the middle-sized states of Europe contains.

I hope you will not suppose me to be hard-hearted; indeed, I am sure you will not. I would venture to argue or illustrate what I think in this way with very few people indeed, because it would be mistaken. War, however, is a dreadful evil, although our insular position prevents our knowing much of the miseries of it. We always lose our money, and sometimes our friends; but what is this to being in the seat of war? Let us pray for peace, therefore, my dear little friend, but let us at the same time not forget to thank God that we escape the pollutions of wars, and that the nightingales are not driven from the groves of Bertram by the horrid din of arms.

Talking of arms puts me naturally in mind of hands (no jerk here); hands, of fingers; and fingers, of pen and ink, which I now see combined before me, and those of one of their results—namely, your good mamma's copy of your address for Drury Lane. Now, I'll be very candid. If I had never seen anything else by the same author, I should have said, "This lady has very considerable poetical powers," but I think it as far above Lord Byron's as many of your own works are above it; I suppose your friend, Mr. Whitbread,

prefixed the peer's in order to wheedle him and have his support in the new Parliament, upon the principle of all politicians—"rather to expend their means in buying enemies than rewarding friends." Now, remember, I don't attribute this maxim to one party more than to another.

I have never seen the volume of "Rejected Addresses," but have read some of them in the papers, which I thought very good indeed. I am sorry the author has outraged your nice feelings respecting your name,* although not enough, it seems, to prevent your determination to keep it. I remember to have heard formerly that ladies are induced to part with their names rather by love than fear. By the way, I am in the train of reading the "History of Clarissa," who affords a notable example that fear is not the effectual mode. Pray did you ever go through that work? There is, indeed, tautology of sense—the same things said ten thousand times over. I should be glad to hear your thoughts of that work. With much skipping, I shall have finished it in two or three more sessions. Now God bless you, my dear and good friend. Write to me soon. Write me long letters, and never read them over, because that would be more than lost time. Tell me all that happens. Let me know who is coaxing you to change your name. Are you to be a Quartermaster-general?

Remember me most kindly to your papa and mamma. Tell him (I like to have a little crack at him about politics) that I fear he has lost ground in the new Parliament, but he may perhaps fetch it up in the next, with which consolation I beg to comfort him, and you also, you dear little gray vixen, in which words there is a deep meaning.

From yours affectionately, W. Elford.

Sir W. Elford *to* Miss Mitford.

Bickham, Dec. 23, 1812.

Having a quarter of an hour before dinner, and being dressed and seated in my own room (called in some families

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* He gave the name of Mitford to a fireman: "Whitford and Mitford, ply your pumps."

the lion's den) at my own round table, with my own pen and ink (which it is death for any one to touch), I resolve to devote it to my own dear little friend, and to acknowledge the receipt of her letter by yesterday's post.

I am particularly glad that you have given up your custom of sending your publications to your friends, and I do assure you that nothing but delicacy prevented me hinting to you before now that it was a practice that you had very high authority for avoiding—among others that of Addison, who in a case somewhat similar, when he got into office, was prevented from remitting a great number of fees to his friends and acquaintances by a suggestion that a great aggregate loss would be sustained, while each individual gained almost nothing.

I meant in my observations to make no particular reference to England or to the present war, whether just and necessary or unjust and unnecessary, but merely to state my opinion that in the system of the world generally there are various modes designed by Providence to restrain the inordinate increase of animal life besides natural deaths, and what may be termed accidents; and that this regulation, as applied to the human race, consists in the frequent recurrence of wars (which we learn from both sacred and profane history have existed from the earliest ages of society throughout the world), and, where those have for times been occasionally wanting, that famine and its concomitant pestilence have produced the same effect. I instanced China, and the excessive famines that have raged there within the past century, within which no wars have thinned the inhabitants, as a proof. Do I now make myself understood?

I am doubtful whether the opinion of the world is so much in favor of Richardson's talents as formerly. It appears to me that there is not one character in the whole work that has any natural trait in it, or any marks of distinction which it required any considerable talents to depict. Many of them are known from one another only by some peculiar mode of expression in their letters or conversations respectively. There is no mind or characteristic feature portrayed, and no more skill was required to make such dis-

tinctions than a painter would want, who, finding a family each individual of which always wore a coat of a certain color, should distinguish their portraits by the color of their clothes, instead of the similarity of features. Clarissa is herself the only interesting character of the whole mass, and is on the whole a fine one, but God forbid that her virtue (as to chastity) should ever be considered as of a superior kind. What were her temptations? She knew her lover to be a man of free conduct respecting women. She was not irrationally in love with him, and, after she was in his power, was, by the peculiarity of her situation and her knowledge of his character, put most eminently on her guard. Any woman of common education and principles would have done as well in similar circumstances. I have one positive fault to find with her, which shows her to have come out of the same mint with Sir C. Grandison—who is a most infernal prig, and ought never to be admitted into gentlemen's company, nor ladies' either. I mean a seeming consciousness, which accompanies all she says or does, that it is said and done better than other people. There is a constant display, scenes, acting—in short, there is nothing of the rest of Nature. With regard to the Harlowe family, they are all brutal savages or contemptible idiots. Mr. Richardson may say that he intended them so, but that I deny. You are told indeed that they were fond and loving, and doting on this daughter for her piety, filial love, acquirements, and virtues generally; but throughout the work there is no mark of such feelings. . . .

Saturday.—As I have an opportunity of sending this off, I shall despatch it with all its imperfections. Let me hear from you soon. I shall send to your papa some time or other a little book I once published, as soon as I can get a copy of it. It is on the subject of animals and vegetables, and was written in answer to a man who wanted to revive the doctrine of equivocal generation. I suppose it is more right to send it to you.

Yours most truly and affectionately, W. Elford.

SIR W. ELFORD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Bickham, Dec. 21, 1813.

As no one is less a theorist or hypothesis-builder than I am, it is not to be wondered at that it is only very lately, and by mere accident, I have made the following important discovery—namely, that the power of writing letters is regulated altogether by the writer's distance from the metropolis; that a person who lives within forty miles, for instance, possesses that power in the vast disproportion of eleven to two beyond one who lives two hundred and twenty miles from it, and so on; and that it of course follows that while I have been laboring under an intolerable burden of obligation to you for sending me two letters for one, you have, in fact, been under the highest obligation to my moderation in not insisting on receiving more than five to one. . . .

I am happy that you think with me about waltzing. Have you seen Sir H. Englefield's verses? They appear to me perfect as far as touching forcibly the proper points. They are supposed to be indignantly addressed to the man who is found waltzing with the poet's mistress:

"What! the girl I adore by another embraced?
What! the balm of her breath shall another man taste?
What! pressed in the dance by another man's knee?
What! panting recline on another than me?
Sir, she's yours; you have pressed from the grape its fine blue,
From the rosebud you've shaken the tremulous dew;
What you've touched you may take. Pretty waltzer—adieu!"

Is it not excellent? Before I had seen this I had written something to render the waltz odious, which I sent to a friend in town to get inserted in some newspaper; and if it should be printed, I'll refer you to it. Mine pretends to be a history of its origin (in prose), and I have endeavored to give it an air of truth; with the exception of a few names of persons and places, the whole is sheer invention. I wish all good people would lift up their voices against the introduction of this dance. I am sure it will never be generally tolerated in this country, unless the moral feeling of the

community has undergone a change, which I trust is not yet the case. Now adieu, my dear, for the present.

Now I am come to Wednesday, the 29th, and have just a frank for Saturday, the 1st; and so, in the first place, I beg leave to wish you, my dear and fair correspondent, and your papa and mamma, a happy new year, and many happy returns of the present season, etc., etc., which is, I believe, the proper form to be observed on such occasions.

I have not before—that is, in the former part of this letter—observed on the epigram on your Scotch judge, which I like very much, although it is founded a little on puns, or, at least, a certain degree on playing on words. I knew nothing of your humpback being a Welshman—why did you suppose I knew it? I will write out an epigram for you on a Mr. Wise, a Devonshire man lately appointed consul-general in Sweden, who is anything but what his name imports, and who, I am informed, is about to return from his post under the sentence of incompetency:

> "In pride of wealth and pomp of power arrayed,
> Caligula his horse a consul made;
> More monstrous still, Lord Liverpool, alas!
> Confers that mighty honor on an ass.
> Indignant Rome the insult heard with sighs,
> But abject Britain calls her creature *Wise*."

If I was wise (worldly wise) I should leave this admirable *jeu d'esprit* unremarked on, in the hope that you might suppose by possibility that I had some hand in it; but I cannot, even for the high bribe of your good opinion, deck myself for a moment with another man's bays. I do not know the author, but I think it quite perfect.

What do you think about peace? I consider it as certain, and if you and I, your papa and mamma, and Lord Liverpool and Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt were but now sitting down together, I could convince every one of you by incontrovertible arguments that the chances of a peace arising out of the present crisis are as a hundred to one in favor of it; and I intend, within a few days, to write down those reasons—to seal them up in the presence of credible witnesses; and if they are well founded, and demonstrate a proper insight and

view of the different interests, objects, and motives of the various parties as they will be developed during the negotiation, I shall send them, duly attested, to the Prince Regent, and demand to be made Prime-minister out of hand—in which case, your papa being duly wigged, shall be immediately constituted Metropolitan of All England; your mamma be Chief-justice (you have heard that "my mother's a justice of peace"), and you shall be Chancellor of the Exchequer and Poet-laureate. Don't say, therefore, when you see what I have done for you and yours, that men when they get into power forsake their friends.

Now I am going to bid you adieu, but not forever (I mean forever only till Saturday), as I hope my genius will be renovated sufficiently by that time to enable me to fill this page.

New Year's day.—Last night was New Year's day to me; and, if you can't make that out, you must know that I was forced to play a rubber of whist after twelve, after which there were two peremptory rubbers, which brought on the hour of one; when there being but four of us, and thinking it was not right to part just at that particular moment, we played our final peremptory, so that I did not get to bed till past two. All this happened at the "Pope's Head" in Plymouth, from which I know you will infer that I am in favor of the Catholic claims.

I must finish my paper, and have room for very little more, but that little I cannot find. I remember in an epitaph written by a Dr. Greenwood on his deceased wife, after enumerating her various good qualities with much feeling and pathos, he proceeds thus:

> "Now, my grief for this dear woman is so very sore
> That I really can write but four lines more."

I have room only for two, which must be dedicated to wishing you all the joys of the present season, and assurances of affectionate regards from W. Elford.

You owe me three letters—

To Wm. Elford.

One letter due on former account.. 1
For goods now sent..... 2
3

P.S.—With W. E.'s humble respects to Miss Mitford—hopes no offence for sending in the bill, as is usual this Christmas-time.

The following are specimens of Sir W. Elford's poetical productions:

ON HEARING A YOUNG LADY OBSERVE THAT "KISSING WAS A FOOLISH THING," WHO, ON BEING ASKED HOW SHE COULD JUDGE, REPLIED THAT SHE HAD SEVERAL BROTHERS WITH WHOM SHE WAS A GREAT FAVORITE.

Never did love's tumultuous joys
That bosom yet inspire,
If by a brother's mild embrace
You'd guess a lover's fire.

Perhaps ere years, ere months, are flown
Your radiant eyes may languish;
Your beating heart, your trembling frame,
May own the pleasing anguish.

Then should the fond and favored youth,
As earnest of his bliss,
Impart on his dear Laura's lips
A pure and ardent kiss,

Would you those chilling words repeat?
Ah no! I know too well,
And though I guessed your altered thoughts
You would not "kiss and tell."

Then should you, Laura, dare to say
Your thoughts could never alter,
Your conscious cheeks would tell the tale
Your trembling tongue would falter.

But once at Hymen's altar bound,
You'd own all earthly bliss
(If own you durst) was only found
In the pure nuptial kiss.

Oct. 16, 1803. W. E.

To Miss Treby of Goodamoor, on her Desiring the Author to Write some Lines on a Scroll on which Others of her Friends had Written.

In ancient lore, we learn, Ithuriel's spear
Made all, when touched, in their true form appear.
On kindred principles, this magic scroll
Draws forth the deepest secrets of the soul;
The hand, whilst resting on this potent spell,
E'en a poetic fiction dare not tell.
Truth then must out, or else I would have told ye
That young and old with apathy behold ye;
That you have neither winning air nor smiling eye,
Nor dimpled cheek with hues of roseate dye—
All this I would have told, and you believed,
For thus might modest merit be deceived.

Feb. 13, 1808. W. E.

Occasioned by Seeing Mrs. Siddons Perform Several Characters on the Stage at Plymouth.

Far from the busy scenes of mirth and strife,
In listless indolence I passed my life;
Felt neither pains nor pleasures in excess,
And thought that apathy was happiness.
But Siddons came, and at her magic call
The wildest passions filled my ravished soul;
Sorrow and joy alternately prevail,
Now pity melts, and terrors now assail.
At her command, with jealousy I burn
With her despair, and e'en to madness turn.
When Love's the theme, her winning accents flow
Soft as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow;
Her sighs I hear, her melting looks I view,
And my fond heart allows the picture true.
Still as each varying passion she portrays,
The strong impression her whole frame betrays;
Her looks, her voice, her gestures so agree,
Uniting all in such fine harmony,
That from her voice the blind her looks declare,
And in her sparkling eyes the deaf may hear.
To thee, O Siddons, now I call in vain;
Give me repose and calmer joys again:
In vain I call—these joys, alas! now fled,
Have left tumultuous passions in their stead.
So o'er the heath at early dawn of day
The traveller winds his scarce distinguished way,

On either side beholds, with brow serene,
The dull, unvarying sameness of the scene;
Nor trees nor hedges cross his languid eye,
And floating vapors still obscure the sky.
Soon from the hills in majesty sublime
The glorious orb of day begins to climb;
At first he tries, with half-averted sight,
The painful pleasure of the new-born light;
At every glance around new objects rise,
Fresh woods and rivers meet his ravished eyes;
And, as he eager contemplates the whole,
Ten thousand new ideas fill his soul.
What though, alas! the sun's declining ray
Shall chase those charming objects far away,
Soon with another morn his rays again
Shall bless the traveller and illume the plain.
Oh, mayst thou, Siddons, like the sun return,
And with new ecstasies our bosoms burn;
Return and cheer us with thy genial ray,
Nor let a night too long succeed our happy day.

W. E.

Through Sir W. Elford, Miss Mitford became acquainted with Haydon. The artist was a Plymouth man, and Sir William joined another Plymouth banker in purchasing his first important work, "The Judgment of Solomon," for three hundred guineas. Sir William told Miss Mitford to go and see the picture then on view in London. She went with a friend, but, arriving late in the day, was refused admission. A silver key, however, procured entrance to the room whence all had departed, except a bright, dapper little man in a sailor's jacket and white trousers. He pointed out to them the best position for seeing the picture. It was Haydon himself, who afterwards became one of Miss Mitford's most constant correspondents. The two Landseers and Eastlake were his pupils; but he was ambitious, and persisted in painting immense historical pieces, for which there was little or no demand.

R. A. Davenport *to* Miss Mitford.

Perry Hill, Sydenham, Jan. 29, 1815.

In spite, my dear friend, of your obstinate, detestable, and pernicious heresy with respect to the Spaniards—a heresy

fit only for mad Edinburgh reviewers and mad "Morning Chronicle" men—in spite of this, I should long ere now have done myself the pleasure of writing to you, had not various circumstances arrested my pen. Imprimis, I have been so exceedingly ill as to entertain hopes that I should be able to "shuffle off this mortal coil;" as, however, I am fated to be always disappointed, I am still an inhabitant of this best of all possible worlds. In the next place, the loss of time threw a heavy burden of business upon my shoulders. Thirdly, I have encountered several severe vexations. I could go on thus through a ream of paper; but if these reasons for having been silent are not enough, I will sooner appeal to your mercy than give any more.

But why do I talk of asking *you* for mercy, when I feel so angry as to be hardly disposed to display any myself? I protest that, were it not abominably indecorous to think of beating a lady, I should have more than a month's mind to beat *you*. Yes, you are a libeller—an inveterate, shameful libeller. Why, Leigh Hunt has had two months' imprisonment for an offence not a tithe of that which you have committed! Think of this and reform. Do you imagine that I will allow my friends to be caricatured in the most outrageous manner? You have with malice prepense and aforethought, as the blessed lawyers say, labored to make me entertain an unfavorable personal idea of a lady for whom I have the sincerest esteem. But all your trouble is thrown away, for, firstly, I do not believe a tittle of your description; and, secondly, were every tittle of that description true, I should still esteem and admire her. I flatter myself that some day or other I shall have it in my power to assure her of this *by spoken instead of written words*. So pray leave off gnawing the file. To tease you still more, I shall send you a sonnet to that lady which I composed the other day:

SONNET TO MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

Mary, 'tis sweet from all the giddy throng
Retired "at eve, when all the woods are still,"
To hear the lone and plaintive warbler trill,
By melody inspired, the liquid song.
'Tis sweet, reclined the woodland shades among,

To list from Eol's lyre the tones that fill
The breast with tenderness, or wildly thrill,
As zephyr breathes the magic chords along.
But sweeter than to hear the night-bird singing
When peace reposes on the moon-lit plain,
Or tones from airy lyre of Eol ringing
In bonds of harmony the soul that chain,
Oh, sweeter far, diviner pleasure bringing,
To hear thee, Mary, pour thy heavenly strain!

R. A. D.

Now, I will defy any living creature to say that there is not in the above sonnet at least four fifths of a line which deserves to be praised. Should this be allowed, and it only be objected that all the rest is bad, I shall declare that the fault is not mine, that it belongs to the subject, and thus syllogistically will I prove it. The soul of poetry is fiction; there is no fiction in my sonnet; ergo, my sonnet, being denied a soul, *could not* be a good one. If I am not sufficiently intrenched here to set at defiance all the logical hair-splitters in Christendom, why, the deuce must be in it!

How does your second volume go on? I hope that the genius of indolence does not still hold you in his fetters. We are all ready enough to put on those fetters—at least, I can answer for myself. But Spenser says—speaking, however, on quite a different subject—

"Folly it were in any being free,
To covet fetters, golden though they be."

Positively, I must insist that you do find or make a story—not to excuse yourself, but to fill a second volume.

Have you heard that I am to encounter a rival? It is even so. There are certain persons at Edinburgh who, I know not for what reason, have *always* regarded my work with an evil eye. Long ago, these gentry, of whose names even I am ignorant, announced a volume, which, however, never appeared. They are now going to publish in good earnest. The editor is Mr. Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, and I am told that he has procured pieces from Walter Scott and others of name in the poetical world. He means to publish a volume half-yearly, and his plan excludes, I am told, everything but original poetry. I should never have

dreamed that his book was meant in direct hostility to mine had I not been apprised of it by a gentleman of Edinburgh, who has a most extensive knowledge of the Scottish *literati*. As long as they do not personally attack me, I shall neither strive to do nor even wish them ill. If they think proper to cry me down, I hope to show them that I have something of their own thistle about me.

I congratulate you sincerely on your deliverance from the rhyming family—"farthest from *them* is best." It is to be hoped that they are not gone among people who are subject to headache!

Present my kindest regards to your father and mother. Adieu, my dear madam.

I am, with warmest esteem,

Your obliged and affectionate friend,

R. A. DAVENPORT.

The concluding letters of this chapter give us a last glimpse of Dr. Mitford's political connections. The first is from Mr. Perry,* the editor of the celebrated Whig *Morning Chronicle*. From 1813 till his death in 1821, Miss Mitford spent a considerable portion of every year on a visit at his residence, Tavistock House "where they do the honors of London to great perfection." She went to their box at the opera, and met at their parties "all that was greatest and highest in mind and accomplishment," including Lord Erskine, Sir S. Romilly, Dr. Parr, Brougham, Moore, and Barnes, the editor of the *Times*.

MR. PERRY *to* DR. MITFORD.

Strand, Sept. 26, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am sure you and your dear ladies will be delighted to hear that at length I am relieved from the torture of suspense. I have a letter from Mrs. Perry, dated Gibraltar Bay, August 1. They were taken prisoners by an Algerine frigate on the very day they set sail, plundered of all provisions and water, reduced to absolute want, not suffered to land on reaching Algiers, not supplied with provi-

*The father of the late Sir Erskine Perry.

sions, but ordered off at an hour's notice. They sailed from there on the 17th of July, were becalmed for seven days in this exhausted state, and reached Gibraltar Bay on the 31st of July. There they are condemned to perform quarantine for forty-two days. My friend Admiral Fleming, who commands at the station, gives them every comfort, and, I trust, will be able to send them home in a ship of war. My wife says they have passed through the calamity with fortitude, and that under happier circumstances the voyage would have been favorable to her health. She has suffered much from want of food, and they are all reduced by debility. Pardon my extreme brevity, as I have many letters to write to relieve our anxious friends; but there are none whose hearts will be more gladdened than your own and my most dear and affectionate Miss Mitford's. Believe me all to be,

Your truly grateful friend, J. PERRY.

Mr. Perry was a brother-in-law of Porson, and at his house Miss Mitford became intimate with the stepdaughter of that celebrated scholar and wit. It was probably from her that she obtained the following lines, found among Miss Mitford's papers, and entitled

CHARADE BY THE LATE PROFESSOR PORSON.

My first is the nymph I adore,
The sum of her charms is my second;
I was going to call it my third,
But I counted a million or more,
Till I found they could never be reckoned;
So I quickly discarded the word.*

W. A. MADOCKS *to* DR. MITFORD.

Thursday, ——— 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,—1,000,000,000,000 thanks for your kind remembrance of me, and the valuable specimen of the swinish multitude which, through your means, Mr. Haywood has favored me with. How can I make him or you a suitable return? To send a copy of Bacon to me, so well versed in

* Several of Porson's charades may be found in Beloe's "Sexagonorium."

the law as you are in your magisterial capacity, and so well grounded as you are in the principles of his liberal and enlightened philosophy, would be superfluous. I must be content, therefore, to remain for the present, at least, your grateful debtor. My man starts to-morrow at four o'clock to be in Warwick Lane by half-past, to await the arrival of his Boarship, and he will be conducted here to a breakfast of the freshest vegetables and purest milk. From him, no doubt, will spring a long line of illustrious successors, much to the gratification of the Christians and mortification of the Jews.

I have sadly regretted being prevented from attending poor Sheridan's funeral, by the obligation I was under to accept the invitation of my constituents to dine with them to celebrate my first election.

What a fame (*monumentum ære perennius*) has Sheridan left behind him!—that of having written the *best* comedy, and delivered the best oration that was ever produced in this eminent country. The last words he said to me at Cowes at parting, after a delightful month last autumn, were, "Do stop one day more. Upon my honor, I'll set off to-morrow. My carriage is waiting at Portsmouth, and we will make two days' journey of it—we'll jog up together

'In gentle conversation, sweet and mild.'"

My testimony to Sheridan's private character is that of his being a most amiable and full-hearted man. Glowing, generous, and friendly,

"If to his lot some human errors fall,
Sit by his side and you'll forget them all"—

most true of him while living; and now we shall never see him more, or his like again.

Most sincerely yours, W. A. Madocks.

Sheridan's second wife, a Miss Ogle, was a sister of Lady Dacre and cousin of Miss Mitford.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. AND MRS. HOFLAND.—LETTERS FROM MRS. HOFLAND.—MISS MITFORD'S TRAGEDIES.—LETTERS FROM MISS PORDEN.—LETTERS FROM P. BAYLEY.

ANOTHER of Miss Mitford's artistic friends, also addicted, like Haydon, to covering yards of canvas with sacred subjects "whether people buy or not," was Mr. Hofland. He was a man of talent; "he talks pictures and paints poems." She introduced him to Sir W. Elford; but his wife was her especial favorite. This lady had great literary productiveness and ability, wrote seventy works, mostly novels, and added descriptions to her husband's engraved sketches. Miss Mitford tells her that "the pictures will get fame and money, the books money and fame;" and observes, "She is womanly to her fingers' ends, and as truth-telling and independent as a skylark." She was a correspondent of Miss Edgeworth, and of Miss Mitford from her early years, and was with the latter in the "deserted great house" in 1818;* but the first letter we have from her is dated May 25, 1820.

MRS. HOFLAND *to* MISS MITFORD.

May 25, 1820.

I made up my mind not to write even to dear you till I had with my own eyes seen Haydon's picture, and looked into it with all the powers of eye, mind, and heart I could muster. I have done so, and, after two full hours of gazing, shutting my eyes, thinking, and then gazing till the tears obscured 'em, I pronounce that "The Christ" is admirable, sublime, affecting, and precisely what a Christian desires to own as his Lord and Master; the God he adores; the Friend

* Bertram House, which Dr. Mitford built and had to part with from pecuniary embarrassment.

he trusts; the despised One it is his pride to defend; the glorious One it is his honor to belong to; the Man who suffered on the cross; the Judge before whose eye the heavens shall roll away and the sea give up her dead, yet whose benignant voice shall say to the trembling, lowly heart, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."

There were a great many people, but as I went alone, sat alone, and was alone with the picture so long a time considering it in every point, tracing through the written word all the succession of events, designs, and (so far as such a worm may presume) the feelings of that unfathomed and unfathomable ocean of goodness, the heart, which might be supposed to act upon the features, and impress them with character, so I conclude myself more mistress of this mighty object than many with whom it is a subject for criticism; and I have at least the satisfaction of *believing* that I know it as well as most of them, who have had far better opportunities of studying it; but mark, I gave my whole attention to *one* object. I saw much beauty in the whole, very much, but I was only fascinated by the great object, and that arose out of my determination of examining it; "having seen, I loved Him." Now, I apprehend this is a proof of excellence, for Raphael's pictures, I am told, have ever this effect—*entre nous*, Raphael never painted a head so full as this—yet I am mortal enough to wish it had not been so old, and that it had had a little more *positive* beauty in it; but I know myself to be wrong in this, for incessant thought must destroy mere beauty and antedate age. There is a woman that will be seen in full front that I dislike much; it is ill-dressed, looks as if the posture (though natural) had been drawn from a lay-figure, and the arms are so evidently a man's arms that to my eye they are quite offensive. They could be altered with the greatest ease; how I did long to do it! It is only putting flesh over that part just below the joint, which is always flat in a man with evident muscular strength, but round in a woman, unless she is a charwoman. The whiteness, too, is that of a man's arm which the sun has never visited; it is quite distinct from the lively delicacy of a woman's skin in the same part, and the wrists are those

of a porter. What a pity he had not a lady to sit to him then!

Mr. Haydon had just left the place, which I was sorry for at the time; but I am not sorry now, for had he been there I could never have held such "high converse" with his awful endearing picture as I did, nor have so saturated my memory and stamped it on my mind as I find I have. I must, however, go again to look at Wordsworth, etc., etc., for though, indeed, I saw a "goodly company," and they gave a magnificent impression as of a triumph, which called for my Alleluia, yet I have not acquaintance with any individual save the woman who teased me with her arms.*

I rejoice, my dear friend, that you are within reach of your old friends—the walks about Bertram House; for there is something to me inexpressibly dear in an *old* walk, and even the charm of novelty does not attract me so much in any scene as the delight of looking on that which I have looked on before, and loved before. Flowers and shrubs so seen are friends revisiting us, and claiming our wonted smiles; their beauty is friendship: it is more—it is the promise of immortality given us by their resurrection, when friends, still fairer and infinitely dearer, will bloom around us to part no more. So feeling, I am sorry to leave our walks and may-thorn and nightingales, but, I believe, in about a month we shall go to Wells; *ad interim* I shall have business to go through in my house, which you will be able to sympathize in after a removal. But, mind, it will be at least three weeks before we go; so, if any gale of Arabia should blow you hitherward, *here* we are, proud and happy to welcome you, as a flower promised and delayed for three successive springs.

If my master were here, he would unite with me in every kind of respectful remembrance to Mrs. Mitford and the doctor, and all sorts and shapes of good wishes to your darling self. Pray do not forget me when you play nurse at Farley Hall, where I envy your calling. I hope Mrs. D. is quite well, and all remains of Mr. D.'s accident forgotten.

* In her reply to this letter, Miss Mitford says, "I know the woman whose arms you dislike—the Canaanitish woman, the giantess in front of the picture, which always seemed to me very unpleasant."

My Fred* tells me he is well; but, as he is very busy reading, I have many fears for him. Mothers and wives are trembling creatures at best. Happy are the single!

I am, at all events, yours most affectionately,

B. Hofland.

Between the time of writing the preceding letter and the following, Mrs. Hofland's life was saved—by a lawyer's bill! Mr. Hofland had been engaged in a Chancery suit, which, though gained, afforded no pecuniary advantage, as the costs were to be taken from the property. On Mrs. Hofland hearing of this sad termination of their hopes, she was greatly disappointed; and, just as she was about mounting on the Twickenham coach to return, remembered that she might save sixpence in going by the Richmond stage, and withdrew her foot. The coach was overturned on the journey, and the woman who took her place was killed.

Mrs. Hofland *to* Miss Mitford.

Dec. 23, 1821.

My dear Miss Mitford,—I have thought of *you* continually when the terrible weight of my own affairs allowed me to think at all; but incessant occupation has prevented my reading, and even seeking up the books necessary to be read. When I tell you that I have had sickness in every branch of my little family at home, and that he who is my *one* branch, fruit, and blossom has been ill at Cambridge, and is coming home to be nursed as soon as it is possible to remove him, you will see at once how impracticable all efforts of mind and imagination have been to me.

Yet this is not the worst. The person against whom we got our suit in the spring was ordered to pay the money into court November 1. He has *not* paid, *will* not pay; but will, by some of those nefarious acts every day practised, contrive to turn bankrupt, go to prison, secrete his property, and not only cheat us of the sum we sought, but throw the whole costs on Frederick. So, just as he is straining every nerve

* Mrs. Hofland's adopted son.

in attaining knowledge, he is suddenly cut short, his efforts paralyzed, his past expenses rendered nugatory, his health, already injured, completely destroyed, and—but I cannot go on. I could open my veins to save him, but it is not in my power to help him. I am at times almost beside myself.

Mr. H. has been very poorly, which is no wonder, for this unexpected stroke fell along with the difficulties of dark days and a large picture. It was on the strength of having the means of payment fully in his power that he ventured to engage in his exhibition expenses, and took that ready cash which is now called for a thousand ways, and which was Frederick's, who wants it worst of all, and who, unused to grapple with the world, shrinks into agony at the thought of a creditor. Still the dear creature struggles to support me, and smiles in the storm. He will not smile long on earth; but, if there is a heaven, he will rejoice in it forever.

When he comes I will try to think with him, for he is very likely to think of a character and story for you; for his reading is very extensive, and it will be well to wean him from his own oppressive state of feeling. Most thankful should I be if we could suggest anything that would give your exquisite powers a theme to work on. I assure you, uneasy as we are on our own account, both H. and I could think of nothing last night but your vexatious disappointment about "Foscari."

Give our best regards to those dear parents, who, I know, feel more for you than you do for yourself, and believe me, my very dear friend, most truly yours, B. HOFLAND.

P.S.—Excuse all blunders. You are well aware what state my spirits are in, and how ill able I am to write at all. Rejoice, at all events, that you are not Haydon's wife.

We have now arrived at a time when, owing to the doctor's extravagance, money became very scarce in the Mitford cottage. As a writer of fugitive poems "Missy Mitford" had gained some little reputation, and the desirability of obtaining something more solid than praise now began to occupy her thoughts. The public owe much to her embarrassments,

and Mr. Harness often said that but for such pressure she would have published very little. On visiting London in 1820, she saw at one of the theatres an indifferent tragedy performed, the author of which, she was told, received three or four hundred pounds. This led to her entering a new and more ambitious field. The first play she wrote was "Fiesco," the dialogue of which "put salt on Mr. Macready's tail," but did not catch him; for she exclaims, in despair, "Ah! I shall never have the good luck to be damned!"

But she continued to work, and was more successful in "Julian," "Foscari," and "Rienzi."

Miss Mitford first met Miss Porden at Mrs. Vardill's house when staying in London in the summer of 1822. By a strange coincidence, Mr. Whittaker had just sent her Miss Porden's "Cœur de Lion" to review. Miss Mitford found her very pleasant, and her conversation earnest and natural, accompanied with a considerable amount of action. Truth compels her to add that she was plain, but this reflection she lightens by observing that she never saw a literary lady, except Jane Porter, who might not have served "as a scarecrow to keep birds from cherries."

ELEANOR ANNE PORDEN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Brighton, Aug. 5, 1822.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I fear you have thought me very negligent and ungrateful in not replying sooner to so kind a letter as your last, but I have been induced to delay writing from day to day, first because I expected every week to see your sonnet in the *Literary Gazette*, and, secondly, because we were for nearly a fortnight on the eve of an excursion to White Knights, and I waited in the hope of telling you that we should intrude upon you for half an hour. But, to show the vanity of all earthly expectations, the editor of the *Literary Gazette* has been so ungallant to us both as to keep the sonnet still imprisoned in his bureau: our journey to Berkshire vanished into smoke, and my letter remained unwritten. We are now at Brighton, in a state of similar uncertainty as to whether we shall again be attracted to the Norman coast or return to London; but I need hardly tell

you that the vestiges of our ancestors on the opposite shore have strong charms for my father. It has been oddly remarked that England has been at the mercy of every invader; that she has acknowledged as conquerors the Romans, the Danes, the Saxons, and the Normans; and yet hers is the soil in which freedom has taken its firmest and healthiest root, and her sons are very apt to believe and boast her chalky cliffs inviolable. Shall I suppose that, as it was once fancifully believed of Ireland, not only is no noxious reptile native to her clime, but that those which are transported thither either perish or change their nature? or is it that the invaders, the Romans excepted, have found the conquered realm so fair that in making it their seat of empire they have adopted its interests as their own? At present her security is certainly in her seas and wooden walls; for, if any enemy were once upon her shores, a fair and fruitful region is the easiest conquered. England would have no fastnesses, natural or artificial, and dreadful must be the waste of blood where there are no ramparts but those of flesh. However, I am not going to annoy you with a dissertation on a subject which, though hackneyed enough, has only arisen in my mind at this moment, suggested, I suppose, by the association between our Norman forefathers and the chalky cliffs we stand on.

A friend of mine scolds me frequently for my partiality to the rival coast, and professes himself a Saxon with almost as much pertinacity as Cedric in "Ivanhoe." He asserts that the Normans, cruel and despotic as they were, found the Saxon institutions so excellent that they durst not presume to alter them, and that we owe to them almost all the advantages of our boasted Constitution. This I will in a great degree admit, and yet, as far as regards myself, I would rather claim a Scandinavian than a Teutonic origin. I am inclined to trace to the Romans our patriotism and public spirit, perhaps also some of our democratic clamor. To the Saxons I allow our domestic character, with the coolness and intrepidity to which we have frequently owed so much; but I must claim for the Normans the spirit of chivalry and of mental activity which, exercised in one direction, has led

to our superiority in arts and science, and in another has enabled us to combine in our literature the romantic and the classic. The military and the naval character we have equally inherited from all, and perhaps no three races could be selected better qualified to counteract the defects of each other, by which position I arrive at the conclusion that if we are not super-excellent it is our own fault, and we deserve a double punishment.

I have had a letter from Mrs. Niven, which breathes all the happiness of the honeymoon, which, indeed, ought to shine with peculiar brilliancy in the romantic scenery of Scotland. I wonder whether his majesty's visit to Scotland will tempt the bridal pair again to Edinburgh?

Indeed, you pay me a great many compliments which I do not deserve. I have, I believe, a clear head and tolerable memory, but I shall never rival Mrs. Carter either in diligence or attainments. The one is scarcely to be reached without the other; and, were I to attempt such application as hers, I should lose health and memory and mind altogether. I believe I must be content, like the sparrow, to pick up what falls in my way, provided I can but retain the power of digesting and assimilating it afterwards.

Our present correspondence reminds me of Miss Edgeworth's tale "L'Amie Inconnue;" but our meeting at Mrs. Vardill's has, I trust, precluded the possibility of such a denouement, and I speculate on many future conversations with you, both in London and Berkshire. Should you write before my return to London, your letter will either follow me or await me, according to our movements. This epistle, I am aware, is very stupid, for it has met with so many interruptions that the beginning of a sentence had to seek for its conclusion among a herd of other fancies which had been careering through my brain in the meantime. My next will have a chance of being more amusing. By-the-bye, I think that *our* habit of employing the plural pronoun to designate papa and me had nearly made part of this page unintelligible to any one not accustomed to our regal style. Let me therefore say that my father begs a little corner in your mind till he can claim one in your memory, and that *we*

would both express the same wish to your father. Does he never come to town, and do you scorn to make more than a flying visit? Believe me, my dear Miss Mitford,

Yours very sincerely,

ELEANOR ANNE PORDEN.

P.S.—Are your labors nearly completed? I long to find that you have fairly beaten Lord Byron out of the field. I have not read his "Foscari," but perhaps yours may induce me to do so.

P. BAYLEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

Cumberland Place, Sept. 21, 1822.

MY DEAR MADAM,—Accept my thankful acknowledgments for your very kind inquiries respecting my health, which, I am sorry to say, has rather declined since I had the pleasure of seeing you. But hope and resolution are strong in me; and though pain makes me occasionally break out into peevishness, I am, on the whole, resolved to bear what it pleases Heaven to put upon me.

I cannot but regret that I had no opportunity of making inquiries relative to your tragedy, the success of which I hope speedily to hail. I confess I am somewhat anxious to know how you have been able to restrain the flow of your poetry, which appears to me copious and luxuriant, within dramatic bounds, and I cannot but suspect that some of your most favorite passages must be sacrificed to the call for "Action, action, nothing but action." This I understand to be the greenroom language of the day; and I sometimes amuse myself with conjectures about the lopping and pruning that any one of our best dramatists would be obliged to submit to were he to appear in the present age. All that I have been able to learn from Mr. Kemble, whom my ill-health has prevented me from seeing so often as I could wish, is that he thinks very highly of your tragedy; and, if I had never read a line of yours, I should rest confident of your success on his opinion. I can also with sincerity approve all that you say of him and of Mrs. Kemble. It would be no easy task for me to point out in all my acquaintance two individuals of whom I think more highly. It was en-

tirely owing to Mr. Kemble that I ever turned my thoughts to writing for the stage. . . .

I have by me a paper of yours, from which I wish to strike out a passage about hares, and I think to banish a portion of the poultry. I must also remark that however a *cat's foot* may be thought a perfection in a greyhound in Berkshire, my father, who was one of the keenest coursers in England, and celebrated in his part of the world for his matchless dogs, would never allow that a cat's foot was proper for anything but a cat or a cur. A long foot is surely more springy and elastic. You will, perhaps, think me very saucy, but I assure you I pique myself on my hereditary knowledge of the subject. And I ought to know all the good points of a greyhound, for I painted all my father's best dogs for him, and, poor as my performances were, they pleased him as well as if Snyders himself had executed them.

Very sincerely yours, P. BAYLEY.

P. BAYLEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

Cumberland Place, Saturday.

MY DEAR MADAM,—I gladly avail myself of every opportunity that offers of writing to you, though at present I am about to tease you. Your letters have afforded Mrs. Bayley and myself so much real pleasure that we seem to have lost something essential to our comfort, now that we have been so long without hearing from you.

Mr. Valpy is absolutely *possessed* by a notion that whatever is done in the *Literary Gazette* must be imitated in the *Museum.* When the papers called "Wine and Walnuts" appeared in the *Gazette* he cried out for a series of papers of the same kind, for which he is now tormenting one of our contributors. Then the poetry published under the signature L. E. L. caught him, and he could not rest for incessantly crying out, "We must get Miss Mitford to write us a series of poetry in the manner of L. E. L." It is in vain that I say, "Let Miss Mitford send us what she pleases; we shall be better than the *Gazette.* Our poetry, on the whole, *is* better than that of the *Gazette.* Nothing but L. E. L. will go down with him.

Now, my dear madam, I beg you to send us just what you will, only send us something. I shall run no hazard of offending against truth in assuring him it is better than anything of L. E. L.'s, and you will see that I shall presently contrive to jerk that out of him. I have a very sincere regard for him, but really at times he tries my patience. It is "in my office" to request that you will oblige us with something for the first week in February, when we are to do great things; but what they are to be I know not. For my poor self, I have always done as well as the great haste I am obliged to observe, from the quantity required from me, has allowed. And unless I have time to weigh what I write, I see not how I am to furnish a less homely commodity.

Mr. C. Kemble is now so much engaged that it is next to an impossibility to find him at home, and my health does not allow me to make the experiment with the hazard of a disappointment. . . . Whatever may be the fate of "Orestes," I cannot but think myself extremely fortunate in having prevailed on Mrs. Kemble to substitute that play for the "Charter of Seville," since I must consider the chances of success are very much in favor of the former. It is resolved that the Furies and Nemesis shall be retained. I hope we shall have a fine overture and choruses from Mr. Bishop, who can do great things if he chooses to exert himself. I had an idea of getting a proposal for an overture, chorus, and songs of the Furies sent to Beethoven. But Mr. C., though not dissentient, thought it needless. . . .

Believe me, my dear madam,
Always most sincerely yours,
P. Bayley.

In reply to the request in the above letter, Miss Mitford forwarded the following short poem, recording some pleasant social gathering:

New Year's Eve. To a Friend.

Banquet and song and dance and revelry!
Auspicious year, born in so fair a light
Of gayety and beauty! Happy night,

Sacred to social pleasure, and to thee
Its dear dispenser, of festivity
The festive queen, the moving spirit bright;
Of music and the dance and all delight
The gentler mistress, beautiful and free!
O happy night! and O succeeding day,
Far happier! when, 'mid converse and repose,
Handel's sweet strains came sweetened; the lay
Divine of that old Florentine arose,
Dante, and genius flung his torch-like ray
O'er the dark tale of Ugolino's woes.

MISS PORDEN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Mortlake, Oct. 11, 1822.

I have been intending for some days to reply to my dear Miss Mitford's kind letter, but, having come to some good friends here for a little air and idleness, I have been so busy doing nothing that I could not find time even to write a letter. Had I been at home, where I have five hundred things to do every day, and that must be done lest the *house should stand still*, I should have had plenty of leisure; but I have often heard my dear papa remark that people in the country who have nothing to do have never time to do anything, and I have certainly caught the infection. You, I suppose, will laugh at my speaking of the country within ten miles of London, but I feel that even this distance shuts me as completely out from all connection with home and its employments as a much greater would do; and if the smoke of the metropolis be visible like a cloud in the eastern distance, the Thames, broad and blue, flows past the end of the garden in all its beauty, while boats and barges glide along its surface and glitter in the October sun. Have you ever noticed the different color of sunlight at different times of the year and day? It seems to be as bright in one season as the other, yet the sun of autumn is not that of spring, and I think that a person waking up from a long trance would be able to distinguish them, even without looking to the landscape. Yesterday we were on the water, and I was enjoying at once the brilliancy and repose of the scene. At no other time could they have been thus united, with neither heat to oppress nor cold to annoy.

Next week will find me at home and hard at work after these my holidays; consequently, according to my former reasoning, both able and willing to find a spare hour for the perusal of your tragedy. I hope it is not very horrible, for I hate the horrors which have been so much in vogue, and have never read either "Melmoth" or "Frankenstein." I believe I might have made myself much more popular if I could get over a certain dislike to write what I should dislike to read; and, though it may be presumption to attack celebrated names and celebrated passages, I must own that Virgil's "Envy" and Spenser's "Cave of Error" are my aversion, as well as some other most exquisitely disgusting allegories. Our own Milton, I think, always keeps clear of this fault; and I cannot believe, in spite of Mr. Maturin and Mr. Wilson and Lord Byron, that it is true taste which tolerates it. Did you ever read the "City of the Plague?" If you have, did you not regret that so many passages, such pure poetry, tenderness, and sublimity, are mixed with descriptions that would almost prevent one from ever reopening the volume? Plague and famine are fine subjects for the Muse, but she need not give one a medical detail of their physical horrors. The French have observed that there is one sense which poets are never permitted to offend, that of smell. The remark is of one, but I think that the other senses also expect some degree of decorum to be observed towards them, or why not give a description of the cabbage-stalks and rotten apples, or the heads and necks and other appurtenances of poultry which sometimes decorate a dunghill? I might almost be made a companion for the dogs in the "Siege of Corinth." You will say that I am always catching hold of some out-of-the-way subject, and letting it run away with me to the end of my paper. In truth, I have read nothing these three months but "Strathallan," which I heard much of when it came out, but feel disappointed in now. The fact is, that the time is past for it. The best parts of it are those which describe feelings that during the late war came home to the bosoms of all. Since the peace, or, at least, since her most precious majesty's trial, all our political and public feelings have been in a

manner asleep, for the interest taken in the distresses of the Sister Isle was of a different kind; and, loyal as I am, I feel no enthusiasm excited in me by the visit of our monarch to the rival capitals of Erin and Caledonia. Neither do I enter into the *housewifely* complaints of the new bread regulations, for I think they will be found an improvement when we get used to them. No, nor even at the maidenly sorrows of the alterations in the marriage act; and having got to this climax, which may as well be the termination of a letter as a novel, I will but express my good wishes for the health and happiness of you and those dear to you, and subscribe myself, Yours affectionately,

ELEANOR ANNE PORDEN.

P. BAYLEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

Cumberland House, Oct. 26, 1822.

MY DEAR MADAM,—Most assuredly I should have written sooner had not three days been entirely wrested from me by increased illness. And at this moment I am so weak from loss of blood, blisters, and from the plentiful use of that, to me, of all medicines the most lowering and distressing, digitalis, that I can just sit up in bed, pretty well backed up by pillows, while I write this letter. I hope it is not ungrateful in me to postpone my thanks for the service you have done me in your remarks on my tragedy until I have expressed the high gratification I have received from the perusal of "Foscari." I must frankly tell you that the play has very much surprised me. I gave you credit for a great deal, but not for what you are mistress of. The drama is your proper walk, and I pray you heartily henceforth to make the right use of your great talents, and to contribute something to the solid, permanent literature of your age. . . .

Will you be so indulgent to the invalid as to allow him to retain this treasure for a few days still? Though it might almost "create a soul under the ribs of Death," I have been reduced to such a state by digitalis that (what has never occurred to me before under the severest illness) for three days I have been almost senseless, and of course could not read. This very day, when, as I lay on a sofa, Mrs. Bayley

played some of my most favorite pieces out of Mozart for my amusement, I was so torpid that for a time I did not even know what was going on. I had always a horror of the medicine; its effects on me are so dreadful. I mean certainly to discontinue it for a time, and to-morrow I trust I shall be able to read the "Foscari," and to enjoy it. I cannot but laugh at my solemn remarks on your "Agnes" when I look back. However, I cannot regret having made them, since they have been the means of my knowing the candor and goodness of your heart. How few are they who, without a hundredth part of your talent, would have refrained from exclaiming against the overweening insolence of the obscure editor of an upstart weekly paper!

Believe me ever, my dear madam,

Your much obliged, P. BAYLEY.

The next letter was written three months later by Mrs. Bayley.

Cumberland Place, Jan. 13, 1823.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—You have doubtless heard of the dreadful event of last Saturday night—one that has forever bereft me of a most tenderly beloved husband, whose loss I must incessantly deplore, and whose memory will be cherished by me with fondest remembrance. I venture to communicate with you; it relieves my overcharged heart, ready to burst with the violence of its emotion. But the hope of a reunion in another world gives me consolation, and, for the sake of my poor orphans, I will endeavor to bear up under this excessive weight of misery. Knowing the delight Mr. Bayley always experienced in the perusal of your letters, I had a melancholy pleasure in reading the one you last addressed to him. Your predictions, alas! how are they verified! When you wrote them, the dear friend (you so kindly called him) was stretched on the bed of death. He often said, "Mary, Miss Mitford and you *must* meet; you would love and admire her; I should wish you to cultivate her acquaintance and friendship. I see her letters, her kind sympathy, and her affectionate wishes are as gratifying to you as to myself."

(*The next paragraph commences with some incoherent expressions of grief.*) Among many kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Kemble are foremost in their endeavors to serve me. Yesterday I had a visit from the latter, with £50 from the Committee of Covent Garden Theatre as an earnest that "Orestes" is received and will in due time be brought out. This will be a most anxious event to me, as its success will enable me to publish with confidence his epic poem. Since his writings have hitherto appeared under a feigned name, Bayley (as a poet) would not excite the interest necessary to be obtained.

Let me thank you, my dear Miss Mitford, for your kind letters to my husband; they cheered him in the hours of pain and suffering, and may heaven bless and prosper you. My children fancy themselves acquainted with you.

Yours most truly and sincerely,

MARY BAYLEY.

CHAPTER V.

LETTERS FROM MISS PORDEN AND JOANNA BAILLIE.—MACREADY.—LETTERS FROM MACREADY AND MRS. FRANKLIN.

THE following letter from Miss Porden is interesting for her allusion to Captain (afterwards Sir John) Franklin, whom she shortly afterwards married:

Berners Street, Nov. 22, 1822.

I am afraid my dear Miss Mitford will not think that I manifest much regret at her having withheld from me the expected pleasure of reading "Foscari" by the length of time I have allowed to elapse without expressing it. The truth is, that I believe you judged wisely in not sending it at this moment (though it is no compliment to say I felt disappointed), for my head and hands have both been full of employment, various in its nature, it is true, but most unpoetical in every variety. I wish I could say that my task was ended, or that I was out of this house. It is the only home I have ever known, and I feel so much attached to it as to be doubly anxious to quit it. I know not whether you will understand this feeling, but I could certainly have left it with much less pain a month ago than now, and shall feel more in leaving it a month hence. However, it is not yet let, and I must await the consequence of two very picturesque *affiches* with which Mrs. Bates has decorated the dining-room windows. In the meantime my business seems rather to grow than diminish, for I could scarcely have imagined the quantity of papers which must be looked over and sorted by myself, besides a still greater portion appertaining to business, which come under the department of executors. I have, however, made much progress, and every day advances my preparations for flitting, notwithstanding that a bad cold has much delayed them.

I was half afraid that you might have misunderstood what I said about the prevailing taste for horrors; had I not been *certain* that you could not have fallen into it, I should assuredly not have hazarded my opinion. But now pray do let me have your tragedy when you can. I have the good habit of not flattering, of not expressing an interest I do *not* feel, but I have also the bad habit of often *not* expressing that which I do feel, and I believe that those who half know me are apt to be offended, because I cannot get my tongue to utter to their face what I can say glibly enough when they are not present. In the present case I can but muster two words. I am *proud* that you should wish me to read "Foscari," and I expect *pleasure* in reading it.

Mrs. N—— has been in town lately, but stayed a very short time. She appears much improved both in health and *embonpoint*. Pray do you know *him?* I was somewhat surprised to be welcomed at my first introduction by a shake of the hand (so long and powerful that I feared my arm would have deserted the socket), followed by half a dozen hearty slaps on the back. I have no doubt that he is a very worthy man, and that he thought it necessary to display some extra cordiality in the matter of his wife's friend, but I must own that I expected rather more polish from *her* husband.

We have lately been much interested in the return of our friend Captain Franklin from the Arctic Land Expedition. It was more than two years since any news had been received of it, and, as the newspapers will have informed you, those concerned have suffered quite sufficiently to justify any alarm of their friends. We have enjoyed the almost exclusive privilege of seeing the whole of the drawings. Those of poor Lieutenant Hood would do credit to *any* professional artist and when we consider their number, the beauty and delicacy of finishing, combined with the extreme difficulties and privations under which they were executed, they become really wonderful, and make him but an object of deeper regret. If he had died from the hardships which the expedition endured, or even if an earlier murder had spared him the miseries of famine, I think his death would be less painful. By-the-bye, there is not a word of truth in the story of

the *Elbe* and Dr. Richardson's tears. Compliments to your father. Write soon to

Yours sincerely, ELEANOR ANNE PORDEN.

Joanna Baillie was one of those whose dramatic power Miss Mitford especially admired. Writing in 1812, she says, "Tragedy must now fly from her superb arena and take shelter in the pages of Shakespeare and the bosom of Miss Baillie."*

JOANNA BAILLIE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Hampstead, Oct. 7, 1822.

MY DEAR MADAM,—I was told some time since by Sir Archer Croft that you expressed a wish to have a copy of my verses on the death of Sir Walter Scott, which were printed, *not* published, not very long after that sad event, and I am quite pleased and flattered that you should desire it. I therefore beg you to accept the only two remaining copies, which, after searching everywhere, can at present be found. They are in bad condition, having been long in some dusty corner, and are not fit to be presented. The verses possess no poetical merit, but they give a faithful picture of that amiable, extraordinary man, and for this you will read them with interest.

I am glad that our friend Lady Croft has had the good fortune to find herself in your neighborhood, and that by her means I shall sometimes have the pleasure of hearing of you.

I hope, when you come to town, I shall have some opportunity of improving the acquaintance that I was so glad to make last spring by favor of our mutual friend Lady Dacre. It will make me very happy to do so.

Believe me, my dear madam,

Your obliged and faithful servant,

JOANNA BAILLIE.

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* In another place Miss Mitford remarks that Miss Baillie's plays were not successful on the stage. Each of them was written to illustrate a single passion. "Her writings are better as poems than as plays."

ELEANOR ANNE PORDEN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Hastings, Dec. 18, 1822.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I should not have detained your "Foscari" so long, but that it reached me in the very moment when I was quitting London on a visit to some friends at this place, and I therefore brought it with me to peruse in the quiet of a *watering-place in the winter*. I know not whether you will feel it a compliment that I was much better pleased with it than I expected, though I can truly add that my expectations were somewhat highly raised. The interest begins at once, and continues throughout, and there are a thousand little touches of great beauty, although (and this in a drama is perhaps the best praise) there is no one passage on which I can fix as possessing a distinct and paramount superiority. I believe I am expressing myself very awkwardly, for my ideas are a little embarrassed by bad pens and bad ink; but I mean the charm of your imagery arises from its being appropriate to the speaker and the place. Lord Byron's brilliants are often so loosely set as to be taken out and replaced at pleasure, and frequently look better by themselves than where he had meant them to be. In your "Foscari" I find, also, a much greater strength than is usual from a female pen, accompanied with many a lambent spark of genuine heartfelt feeling (what a phrase I have made of it!), which none but a woman could have given. With man it is frequently no less a duty than a habit to subdue the expression of feeling, and it is only in his most private moments that he can yield to it with propriety; and, when writing for the public eye, he is very apt to keep the same guard upon his pen as upon himself, and therefore I think it is that woman will often best draw a manly character, and that men certainly excel in their portraits of women. But really I am so stupid this morning that I cannot make anything of my own meaning, and must not expect it of you.

I have a bad cold, and have, besides, received a large packet of letters full of the most heterogeneous matter, and all requiring immediate answers, so that my head is a little bewildered. But, in one word, I like your tragedy very much,

and can suppose your present conclusion to be superior to any of the six former ones. The only thing I could wish for would be a single word of mutual forgiveness between Francesco and Cosmo. Could you not put it in? I assure you I shall look impatiently for the moment of representation, and will do all that in me lies to promote its success. You may readily believe I am flattered about Rienzi, and shall at once pop down what occurs to me; you must not introduce him in his state of buffoonery, for it would be too like Brutus, and throws great difficulty in the way both of the author and actor, but the circumstance may be sufficiently shown, and the comparison made in the first scenes, by the astonishment of the other personages at his change of character.

Petrarch, and the crowning in the Capitol, I would certainly bring in, for it was one thing which made me fix on the subject as dramatic. But I would by no means introduce Laura. Her lover's passion was too ideal in its nature to suit the stage; and, besides, what conversation could be imagined between them, and who could *look* the character? To have given that name even to Miss O'Neill would have been robbing it of a certain sacred character of phantom beauty with which the poet's fancy has invested it. It would never do to show Laura cutting bread and butter for her many children. But he may come in fresh from a distant glimpse of her form, and, in short, perhaps you will have little to do but to transpose some of his sonnets. It is his high political character which will give you most trouble to combine with the sighs of his visionary passion. By-the-bye, he did not arrive at Avignon in the moment of her death or funeral. That, perhaps, might make a fine scene, if it would be kept from appearing an imitation of "Hamlet," which I think it might, especially as being an historic fact. I think you have named all the authors with which I am acquainted as likely to assist you, but I am deplorably ignorant of Italy at that time. Gibbon will go a great way, Sismondi, I believe, is very dull, but, I dare to say, contains a great deal. I should think the first volume of his "Literature du Midi de l'Europe" would be of some use in collateral information; and, at any rate, *that* is amusing. I have an odd

volume of "Posies de Clotilde," which you shall also see. As for your friend with her "sallow, sublime sort of Werter-faced man," I know not whether to laugh or to cry. I have not time to enter into what I think of Englishwomen marrying foreigners, but the idea always makes me almost sick. I would even almost venture to say that either head or heart must have a fault in them; but if you call on me to do so, I will undertake to vindicate myself from the charge of uncharitableness in thinking so. Will you think me very old-fashioned for wishing you and all you love "A merry Christmas and a happy new year," with many to follow them, or for adding the hope that something will soon bring you to London and your sincere friend,

ELEANOR ANNE PORDEN.

The letters of Macready to Miss Mitford are almost entirely upon business connected with the stage. It seems, however, desirable to publish them, as play-writing constituted no small part of Miss Mitford's literary work; and she even believed—with the usual blindness of authors about their own productions—that her principal talent lay in that direction. Mr. Talfourd introduced her plays to Macready's notice, and Mrs. Trollope carried on the negotiations, and so for a considerable time Miss Mitford only knew the great tragedian through correspondence. She afterwards says, "They," the Macreadys, brother and sister, "are very fascinating people, of the most polished and delightful manners."

W. C. MACREADY *to* MISS MITFORD.

March 17, 1823.

MY DEAR MADAM,—Although you must expect from the greatness of your claim upon me some acknowledgment of the too kind, too flattering inscription on the first page of "Julian," I am compelled to disappoint you, for as I cannot say what I ought and desire from an inability to translate with truth my feelings from my heart to paper, I am obliged to request that you will permit me to be still further your debtor, and owe to your indulgence my pardon, as I am already so deeply indebted for my unmerited praise to your generosity.

Let me, however, assure you that my recompense is to me invaluable, and that I accept with gratitude the honor you have conferred on me, not as a remuneration for past services, but as an earnest for the security of my future exertions.

As our mutual good friend Talfourd is absent, will you permit me to instruct you in a few of the necessary *ruses* of dramatic authors? Lose no time in sending copies of your play, with a note in each, to the editors of the different principal papers: it will probably be the means of making them again recur to it, which is, of all things, most desirable.

Depend upon it, I shall neither be inactive in thought or effort until I see "Julian" fairly established, which I am *confidently persuaded* it will be. Your method of rewarding your soldiers "would make women fight" in all the secure anticipation of triumph.

I have the honor to subscribe myself, dear madam, your most obliged and faithful servant, W. C. Macready.

P.S.—Pray urge the publisher to advertise the play almost constantly though this and the next (Passion) week.

Eleanor Anne Porden *to* Miss Mitford.

6 Upper Portland Place, July 31, 1823.

My dear Miss Mitford,—"Better late than never" is an old proverb, and so I will not allow my shame for not having written earlier to prevent my writing to you now. In simple truth, I have often thought of you; but my convalescence, though in many respects rapid and steady, was for a long time not such as to allow me to write without great pain and fatigue from the posture it required; and even now a letter is a task which I put off from hour to hour, till perhaps some one comes in, and then it goes by till the morrow. I know not what is come to me, but since my illness I likewise read nothing, and have no pleasure in working. I hope the use of my faculties will return to me by-and-by, but now it is sometimes quite an effort to think—and yet I am well enough recovered in other respects. If you have heard what is about to happen to me, you perhaps smile, and ascribe my listlessness to that cause, but, I think, very

falsely, and believe there has been no other part of my life in which a prospect of the same event would not have induced very different feelings.

When you next come to London I shall hope to introduce Captain Franklin to you. You will find him a man of sense and worth, but not a literary man—or, to speak more correctly, he reads and thinks much, but is not in the habit of communicating much of what he reads and thinks, except where he is very intimate; and neither his late journey of three years and a half, estranged from all civilized society, nor the being made a lion of, has contributed to wear off a natural crust of reserve. It will, however, I trust, dissolve before your smiles. If not, you must be content to suppose, as others perhaps have done, that "I love him for the dangers he has passed."

Is it not curious, we are to reside in Devonshire Street, in the very house where I was born! I do not pretend to recollect it, having left it when nine months old, but I have always heard it spoken of as peculiarly comfortable and convenient; and I trust to find it so when we are settled in it, but that will not be yet, as we are off on a summer tour first. Not to the *lakes* though, albeit that is the general course of a bridal excursion. Captain Franklin has certainly had enough of lakes, both frozen and unfrozen, and has perhaps even a bit of *hydrophobia*—that is, he prefers the *land* of his own country, much of which he has not seen, to the water, which he knows well enough: and surely we may find enough of romance in Dovedale and the Peak.

I suppose you think me in strange humor; but I am in and out of spirits twenty times an hour, emulating the moon, my mistress; or the water, his subject; or, if you like it better, emulating this strange weather, which jumbles March and April in the dog-days. St. Swithen should never have a candle from me, unless he would dry up some of his showers. He may be called the Jupiter Pluvius of England.

I have not seen "Julian," for I have not yet ventured to any public place; but I read it, and with much pleasure. I doubt, however, whether I do not prefer your "Foscari." Are you at work on "Rienzi" yet? and does Ugo Foscolo

help you with Petrarch? As I said before, I have read nothing, but I mean to read diligently next winter. In short, *we* both mean to do so much next winter that I suppose spring will find us stuck fast in the middle.

My sister has got a fine little girl, and is doing extremely well. Pray remember me very kindly to Dr. Mitford, and believe me,

Yours affectionately, ELEANOR ANNE PORDEN.

In the next letter we find that Miss Porden has changed her name.

ELEANOR ANNE FRANKLIN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Devonshire Street, March 23, 1824.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Being at present relieved from part of my ailment, though still much of a prisoner, I am desirous of reminding my friends, as frequently as may be, at once of my existence and regard for them, and so I will not pass by an opportunity of answering your letter. I am very sorry for the illness that has been in your house this winter; but if your mother has benefited by the late mild weather as much as I have, she has almost ceased to be an invalid. My cough has indeed flown off most agreeably; and, were not I partly in Mrs. Niven's scrape, I might trip it gayly. As it is, my coming out will not be with the violets and butterflies, as you predict, though I may chance to pluck a few of the declining roses; and in the meantime am content to play the old woman. I have had too much to do with illness, during many years of my life, not to know how completely a sick charge absorbs one's time and intellect; and I congratulate you that, in spite of your complaint of stupidity, your own health does not appear to have suffered from nursing, and you have yet been able to snatch a few moments for composition. I shall have great pleasure in becoming acquainted with the inhabitants and economy of *your* village, particularly as you have sketched your portraits in the sunshine. "The short and simple annals of the poor," which have lately poured in such profusion from the Scottish press, I thought at first exquisitely beautiful and pathetic, and the

tone of piety which pervaded them at once appeared as a national characteristic, and was sublime in its simplicity. But after reading a succession of them I wearied of the beauty, the pathos, and even the piety, for they were brought forward too often, and betrayed too much of stage trick. Even the stage, which at first had been delightful, ceased to please, when its repetition proved it to be labored and affected. Salutary as it may be to visit the house of mourning, or to read occasionally those works which make us acquainted with the sorrows and sufferings of our fellow-creatures, from which we ought to derive the double lesson of sympathy in their trials, and cheerfulness under our own, I have ever been of opinion that the brighter side of human life is that upon which it benefits us to look most frequently, and that we all of us need most constantly to be reminded of the blessings which we possess, but too often neglect to enjoy. The ingratitude which led to disobedience was the earliest failing of our nature, and there is still in the gayest hearts a chord of fretfulness and despondency but too ready to vibrate at every trifle, while we are all of us deficient in what I consider the main duty of gratitude.

I was the more forcibly led into these reflections from the periods at which two or three of the works alluded to fell into my hands, and which convinced me that they were no more beneficial reading for one depressed either in body or mind than a sentimental novel is for a girl of sixteen; in fact, I would not take them to the couch of an invalid, the place where works of fiction are most resorted to, by those at least whose general reading is not confined to trifling. I think the public taste is not in any danger of relapsing into Arcadian pastorals, but I suspect these Caledonian pastorals to be almost as ideal. Crabbe, with his occasional coarseness and propensity to dwell upon the disgusting "where there is no need of such vanity," is almost the only one who has dared to be correct, and he has given us some beautiful specimens of "lights" as well as "shadows." Washington Irving, too, has a few delightful fragments of equal fidelity, rendered elegant by the elegance of his own mind. You, I suspect, will remind me more of

him than any of the others, though your style is perhaps very different. I am glad to hear that the "Foscari" are to make their appearance, and wish I could have been of use to you respecting Mr. Young; but I have no one theatrical connection of any kind, and could desire for your sake that you had no need to trouble yourself about the caprices of a tribe proverbially fantastic and unmanageable. However, that and all your undertakings shall have my best wishes and support, little as I can do to help, for, shut up as I am, I not only cannot add my unit to the number of its friends at any critical moment, but I see too few persons to aid it with my tongue, as might have been at other times. By-the-bye, have you read "Alasco?" I have not, but mean to send for it. I do not know whether you are yet so disgusted with Lord Byron as to have lost all interest in his works, but I am informed that the "Deformed Transformed" is absolutely a waste of time to those who peruse it, being without any of those redeeming flashes of genius, and touches of true poetry and feeling, which so long beguiled the public into tolerating more than it ought. Pray do you know anything of Mr. Harness? Your account of his situation when you were in London made me feel a strong interest respecting him, but he has not called since my marriage, and I know not how he is now circumstanced. He was one of those whom I felt more of a friend than our degree of intercourse seemed to account for, and I should be sorry to lose his acquaintance; and, though he be a dandy parson, he is both a man of talent and sound thinking.

Pray say some pretty things to your father for me; and, with my husband's compliments, believe me,

Yours affectionately, ELEANOR ANNE FRANKLIN.

W. C. MACREADY *to* MISS MITFORD.

Mornington Place, April 25, 1824.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Not knowing when our friend Talfourd may leave town, and being a most uncertain person as to my letters, I rather choose to send you this brief acknowledgment of "Rienzi," which I have received to read, than to wait to give a detailed opinion of "Charles"

as its companion. I think it extremely clever; some scenes are very powerful, and capable of being wrought into a most effective play. I have told Rignolds so, and have sent it to him; but though I am nearly certain his sentiments will not vary much from mine, yet I do not flatter you with the expectation that it will be produced this season at Drury Lane, nor indeed was it practicable, should I recommend the step. I shall have some conversation with Talfourd upon it when I see him, and I dare say we shall agree in our views. My sister desires me to say, with her love, that she has received your note, which in a day or two she will answer. Believe me, my dear madam,

Yours most truly,

W. C. MACREADY.

MRS. FRANKLIN *to* MISS MITFORD, *Three-Mile Cross, near Reading.*

Devonshire Street, May 19, 1824.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Your first note and your kind present reached me about the end of last week, and I did not acknowledge them immediately, because I wished first to read at least a part of the little book. I have since done so, and with as much pleasure as I can at present take in anything of the kind; but ever since my last year's illness reading has been so great a fatigue to me that my mind continually wanders from the sense. How much leisure should I otherwise have had this winter! whereas the whole amount of new ideas acquired since May last is not more than one moon should have furnished.

The first thing which struck me in your essays was the exact accordance between your printed and epistolary style. Are you aware how very little the idea of writing for the public changes your mode of expression? Some of your sketches I like very much. "Hannah" I had read before, as well as the "Talking Lady," with whose portrait I was particularly struck, as she had left me about an hour previous to its falling into my hands. You have not done her justice in one or two particulars, for, by some means or other, she does contrive to read a good deal (aloud, I be-

lieve, always), and even writes very respectable verses. A friend of mine was greatly entertained at the change which once took place in her from a temporary loss of voice—a hint for your next edition. "Lucy" also is no stranger to me, for she lived thirteen years with a near neighbor, but I believe her marriage did not turn out well. I also seem to remember your "Two Maiden Sisters," and wish I had been at the cricket match, though I prefer fair weather to foul on such occasions. And now I must tell you that I have a presentiment that you will be quizzed for some of your "Country Walks." I should have enjoyed them as much as yourself, but then I thought there did not exist another such grown-up baby for violets and primroses, hawthorns and wood-anemones, not to speak of the narcissus, with its beautiful pheasant's eye in the centre, and the lily of the valley. But half your readers, whose botanical excursions are limited by the conservatory, "will but hear and smile."

Your remarks on Lord Byron had peculiar force so soon after the news of his death, which could not have reached you. That intelligence came across me like a flash of lightning, or the shock of an earthquake. "God forgive him all the mischief he has done," was my first and involuntary exclamation. I wonder much in what tone and temper of mind he really died. He is a strong example of how much good or evil may be done in a very short life. His talents had raised him to a height from which no one but himself could have degraded him, yet more fallen than he has been lately he could scarcely be. I have heard many express the wish that he had lived to retrieve his character and change his opinions for his own sake, and for the example to society; but I had no hope that this would be the case. We have had many libertines, misanthropes, infidels, much of perverted reason and prostituted talent, but the deep and fiend-like spirit of revenge and hatred, mingling as it does with passages of the most exalted poetry and genuine feeling, with the noblest sentiments expressed with a sublimity that makes one feel proud of our species, has a character of insanity which renders me confident that, to whatever new

objects he might have directed his energies, he never could have made a good or rational being. I have no more idea of moral responsibility as attached to his actions than to those of a maniac or an infant. One thing I am glad of. Murray has destroyed his memoirs, a sacrifice of nearly three thousand pounds; but I should think there is little doubt that the family will indemnify him. On inspection they were so disgraceful in every way that they could not be published, either on his account or that of the readers. A friend of mine who was at Naples when he gave them to Moore (a whole sackful of detached papers), and who read them in the carriage as they afterwards travelled through Italy together, told me at the time that, if ever they met the public eye, it must be with such changes and curtailments as would almost destroy their authenticity. No one whom he ever met, if but once and in the most casual manner, seems to have escaped vituperation in his black journal, and his pen was always dipped in the deepest gall when writing of those who were at the moment his greatest intimates — Hobhouse, for instance. That any man should be capable of so doing, and, above all, should contemplate the idea of so exhibiting himself to the public, is surely, as I said before, a strong evidence of insanity. The taint has been in his family for several generations; let us hope that it expires with him. I have still much to say, and have written a long letter without a word of my husband, or his expedition, or my little monkey that is to be. *N'importe*, you will say perchance; so farewell. Yours affectionately,

ELEANOR ANNE FRANKLIN.

P.S.—I have seen no public notice of your book, except the advertisement a fortnight since. If I meet with any review of it, I will let you know; though, in truth, I think you will hear of *me* first through the newspapers.

MRS. FRANKLIN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Vale Cottage, Tunbridge Wells, Monday, Sept. 6, 1824.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I think you agreed to excuse apologies, and indeed I must tell so nearly the old tale over again that I am glad to commence with the assurance that

the excellent air of this place, and the kind care of my husband and friends, are beginning to restore me to my former self, and that I even venture to anticipate the time when I may once more write without pain. I am astonished at the change which has been wrought in me by a fortnight's stay at this most quiet of watering-places, where, in spite of the rank and fashion with which it is crowded, the country is as rural and the denizens as independent as in your own village. Indeed, I suspect the visitants who resort here are of too high a class to derive much pleasure from the ordinary routine of circulating-libraries and public walks, and are too happy to escape from the gayeties of London, or their own country-seats, to gain a stock of health against the winter by returning to the early hours of their fathers and enjoying their country rambles in perfect liberty. Of society there is plenty, but it is entirely without form, and an early dinner renders tea a welcome and substantial meal, towards which I feel certain longings at the present moment. As for us, we walk, ride, read novels, and nurse little Miss Nelly, who has now completed her third month, and, not having known either illness or drawback of any kind, is as fat and funny as possible. It would do your heart good to see her papa nurse her; he seems to enjoy it so completely. . . .

If I had not again given you some excuse by making the inquiry, I could quiz you heartily for having told me in three successive letters of Mr. Harness's chapel at Hampstead. I understand he now lives a very retired life, which makes me doubly anxious to meet with him and offer him a corner at our hearth or board whenever he may feel himself disposed to use the freedom of a friend. I always liked him, but while he was so much in high society should hardly have ventured to invite him thus familiarly, and in a party I never thought he appeared to advantage. I am sure my husband would be as ready to welcome him as I, and I can say the same of your father and yourself whenever you revisit London. In the meantime I hope this fine weather has quite restored your mother's health, that your book prospers, and that you will write soon to Yours, very sincerely,

ELEANOR ANNE FRANKLIN.

CHAPTER VI.

MISS MITFORD'S TRAGEDIES. — NEGOTIATIONS WITH MACREADY. — MRS. TROLLOPE'S ASSISTANCE. — LETTERS FROM C. KEMBLE, DR. MILMAN, AND MRS. HEMANS.

IN 1822 Miss Mitford wrote that she was "the least bit in love with Charles Kemble, because he was going to bring out her first play, 'Julian.'" It was performed successfully in 1823 at Covent Garden, with Macready as the principal character, and Miss Mitford was encouraged to persevere in the drama by Sir William Elford, Serjeant Talfourd, Mr. Harness, and by her own predilections. But, notwithstanding the merits of her productions, she had great difficulty in obtaining their acceptance either at Drury Lane or Covent Garden. She was, as she says, thrown about like a cricket-ball between Kemble and Macready, and an unpleasant misunderstanding arose with the latter about "Rienzi." He seems to have been anxious to oblige her, and wrote as follows:

MR. MACREADY *to* MISS MITFORD.

10 Conduit Street, Dec. 7.

Mr. Macready presents his compliments to Miss Mitford; begs to inform her that he has presented the play of "Rienzi," with his own opinion of its merits; that Mr. Elliston thinks the play "possesses great merit," and, desiring a card of his terms to be sent to the author, has acquainted Mr. Macready that he will read it again, and wishes to have a personal interview with the author to give a final decision or make an arrangement respecting it.

It appears also that Miss Mitford had already gone to London, at Mr. Macready's request, to have an interview with him about altering some part of the play. Such negotiations might have led a less sanguine person than our authoress to

suppose that the play was accepted. On finding that she was mistaken, her disappointment was great, and a friend wrote on the subject to *Blackwood's Magazine*, using strong expressions, but doing good service to Miss Mitford and the public in bringing her case into notice.

No one appreciated Miss Mitford's dramatic power more fully than Mrs. Trollope,* Fanny Milton, her friend from childhood, who in these days of embarrassment and despondency energetically advocated her cause. Mrs. Trollope had the happiness of being present when her anticipations were realized in the success of the "Foscari," and, between joy for Miss Mitford's triumph and sympathy with the play, "cried herself half blind." Miss Mitford tells us that her kind and warm-hearted friend had set her heart on securing the performance of "Rienzi" either by Kean or Macready. Her interest in the matter is shown in the next letter.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Thursday.

One line, my dear Miss Mitford, I must write to thank you for the high, the *very* high, treat you have given me.

Your tragedy must neither lie on the shelf, nor must it be laid at the feet of "dear William." *If* Kean is about to return this year, I think I can see my way clearly. No, we will not entreat. Do not, however, be afraid of me. When I am talking to "*William*," I always feel quite enough inclined to pet him, and, moreover, I know he would make a glorious RIENZI, both strong against my offending him. But, by your leave, dear friend, he must not play out of "charity." Trust me, dear William would rather eat his heart than see Kean appear in "Rienzi."

Would you indulge Mr. Milman with a sight of the tragedy?

Should Colonna's wife be styled Lady Colonna?

May I write to you when I hear anything of the whereabouts of Kean?

And will you believe me, very sincerely and faithfully yours, F. TROLLOPE.

* See letter in the Introduction from Mrs. Mitford, dated Nov. 14, 1802.

The above seems to have been the first letter from Mrs. Trollope that Miss Mitford preserved. She calls her "a lively, brilliant woman of the world, with a warm, blunt, cordial manner, and many accomplishments."

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Harrow, Monday, 15th.

Have you thought it very strange that you have not heard from me? I am sure you have; but it has not been my fault, believe me, my dear Miss Mitford. The first thing I did after my return was to see my Kean friend. I would have immediately written to you had I learned from him anything *certain*, but I was only told that *nobody* knew what he intended to do, and that his wife was quite as ignorant of his intentions as the rest of the world. I then waited for the coming of Mr. Macready, and as soon as I heard that he was in town I wrote to him, asking him to come here to pass a day with us. He answered that he would do so. A day was fixed, but he could not come. Again and again he was prevented; but yesterday he came, and our dear Marianne with him.

And now, my dear friend, you will think me a sorry ambassador when I tell you that I have done *quasi nothing*. I never saw anything to equal the ice-case into which he retreats the instant a word is uttered relative to his profession, and I confess myself unable to pursue him into it. I got from him that his movements for *next* year (he leaves London on Monday next for *this*) depend entirely on Kean; if he acts in London, Mr. Macready will act in America, and *vice versa*. Thus they cannot be *pitted*, as I had hoped, one against the other. Before he leaves town, however, he shall have a letter from me, which he must read, you know, and which I suppose he will answer. My object in writing shall be to obtain his final determination as to "Rienzi," and according to this answer we must look to Kean for next year or not. I think I can assure you with confidence that he *does not* know who wrote the offensive article; the name of Mr. —— was mentioned incidentally, and he spoke of him with gentleness, and even with kindness, though he said

from what he had seen of him, he did not think him a man of first-rate intellect. Now our friend would not have stopped there had he known who wrote the letter to *Blackwood.*

I was very unlucky yesterday in never being alone with Mr. M. for five minutes. I *would* have hazarded the putting him in a rage had no one been by to see it, but unhappily Mr. T. had brought down a young Oxonian with him, who never quitted us. *If* I hear from him, you shall hear again from me. Is there any chance of your coming to town? I long to see you here.

I write in great haste to catch Mr. Partington, who will carry this to Reading. Let me hear from you, dear friend, and believe me, Very sincerely yours,

F. TROLLOPE.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Harrow, Thursday, June 1, 1826.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Macready, my dear Miss Mitford, dated Bath. Had I the power of procuring a frank, I would enclose it; as it is, I will transcribe what he says upon the subject most interesting. He apologizes very politely for not having answered my letter before he left town, but assures me that incessant occupation prevented it. He then says, "I would not be ill-natured or ungenerous, but I must touch on things that are very painful to remember. All that I could do, and much more than prudence and my own interest suggested, I did, and was prepared to do, for Miss Mitford's play of 'Rienzi.' As a reward for all the friendship I could show her I was libelled in *Blackwood's Magazine* (and the *matter* could only directly or indirectly have been learned from Miss Mitford)—I should be ashamed if I bore her the least ill-will. I acknowledge and respect her very great talents. I think 'Rienzi' an extraordinarily clever play. I should be *most* happy in an opportunity of serving her, and from my very soul I admire her excellent qualities of heart. But what is all this? I am wasting my paper and your time, and coming to no result. What does she wish me to do? I will do anything to serve her. I am not engaged in London; if I

should be, which I do not think probable this year, the managers are so *economical*, I will present her tragedy again. If Mr. Young should be engaged, I will write to him about it. Is there anything else I can do? Instruct me how I can be of use to her, and how I can show you the esteem in which I hold your mediation in such a cause, and I will not be a sluggard in it."

Now in this, my dear friend, there is nothing harsh or unreasonable. He *has* been wounded, and he has felt it; but, as far as I understand the business, he may yet bring forward your noble tragedy as it deserves to be brought forward. There is *nobody can* do it justice but himself. He says in another place that he should prefer the intervention or presence of a third person in any correspondence or conversation with you on this subject; and this is always right in matters any way connected with business. Could I be of any use in this way, you may most freely command me. Tell me how I shall answer this letter. I will say whatever you bid me; and you will, I am sure, agree with me that its gentlemanlike and conciliatory tone deserves an early reply.

Many, many thanks for your letter: it was very cheering to me, for truly I felt ashamed of the cowardice that made me shrink from entering upon the subject, which had occupied my mind the whole day; but I am now really glad I did not, because by transcribing his letter I can do more justice to his expressions than I could have done in repeating what he had said. I heartily hope he will not go to America. We may as well shut up our legitimate national theatre, if he does.

I am longing to get your new volume, and I am longing to see you. I hear in many directions of Mr. Milman's high admiration of "Rienzi." "Said I not right?" You know Mrs. Milton and I differed on this subject; she did not do his taste justice.

It is midnight. I have been at the Harrow speeches, and afterwards dined in a very large party, but I was determined to write to-night. Adieu then, and believe me, truly and affectionately yours, F. TROLLOPE.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Harrow, Sunday [1826].

I write, my dear friend, in all the haste of preparation for my departure; and as all my family are going somewhere or other, I have much to occupy me; so excuse a worse scrawl, if possible, than usual.

Our friend Mr. Macready is at Paris, and one of my first objects will be to write an invitation to him to meet *seul-à-seul* in the Bois de Boulogne. This is where the duels are generally fought: our meeting, I flatter myself, will be of a different kind. It strikes me that your letter is written so sweetly, so gently, so flatteringly, and so much to the purpose, that I cannot do better than to put it into his hands. And now let me give you, *en passant*, my ideas on this subject. I agree with you most completely as to the part's being fitter for Macready than for any other man that lives; it unquestionably is so: and if he would play it with all his heart and all his soul (as Young played the Doge), I know that it must do much both for you and for him. But, dear friend, if there be the slightest doubt, hesitation, or vacillation of any kind in him, I would not, were I you, delay the appearance of this play. *Allez toujours* is what those who know the world best always say to the happy ones of the earth who are sailing before the wind. *Allez toujours*, and you will reach a station which no woman has ever reached before. You will have possession of the stage.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that I would choose Macready for your high-priest, your prime-minister, or what you will, and that nothing but his own *will* should prevent his being so. But, as you are no longer in a situation to rest solely on this, so neither must you. I am perfectly sure that in any case his noble nature and kind heart will lead him to wish the best success to the play. But, suppose he does not take it, it will be because he thinks he cannot do so with advantage; but I do not anticipate this—*quite the contrary*. I only express what I think *in case* my expectations should be disappointed.

I go Wednesday, at 4 A.M., and hope to return the begin-

ning or middle of October. You will see our dear Marianne before that time; she will stay with me till I go. She will tell you of a scheme we have in which we think you may be able to help us, but remember *foi d'honnête femme.* You must betray us to no one. I dare say that you will laugh at our ambitious speculation. Laugh, my dear friend; your arrows will be like Cobham's, tipped with good-nature. Adieu! I *do* think you will come to me when the next play comes out. I charge you make "Inez" graceful, touching, and popular, that is all I ask; am I not moderate?

Ever affectionately yours, F. TROLLOPE.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Harrow, July 2, 1826.

Your kind and gratifying letter, my dear friend, gave me very sincere satisfaction, as it proved to me most clearly that nothing like harshness could rest upon your mind. I think Mr. Macready's faults have been greatly exaggerated by those who have reported him to you—at least, *I* have been able to discover nothing but kindness in his mind towards you, and I believe that this kind feeling has been more pained than chilled by believing that you had ceased to feel equal kindness towards him.

I have now to tell you that he is about to go to America *immediately*, and he has commissioned me to ask you if you would like that he should take your tragedy with him. He desires me to say that he will engage not to bring it forward unless he can do so in such a manner as would *insure its being satisfactory to you.* Let me have an early answer, dear friend, as he is very soon to set forth; and, in case you accept the proposal, let us know what copy to send, and where we are to get it. He has promised to come down here one day before he goes, and I hope I shall have your answer before that day.

Pray give my compliments to your father, and tell him that though Mr. Trollope most cordially wished success to the Liberal candidates, he could not interfere with Burns, whom we now consider as Mrs. Milton's *protégé* rather than ours.

I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson at Mr. Randolph's on Friday. They talked of you, and Mrs. Randolph told me that she must invite herself to visit me whenever you were my guest, which I told her you had more than half promised me. When will you redeem this pledge? Does this heat overwhelm you? and how do your flowers bear it? My rose-tide (as Lord Orford would call it) is almost over, but it has in every sense been a spring-tide.

Will you have the kindness to convey the enclosed notes for me, and will you believe me, what in truth I am,

Very affectionately yours, F. TROLLOPE.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

I will not leave the kingdom, my dear friend, only for a few weeks without saying adieu. I wish heartily that you were going too, as I shall be much with people that I know you would like, and who would like you. We shall pass the first fortnight of our stay at Lagrange, the residence of our valued friend, the venerable Lafayette. What a study would this admirable man be for such a pencil as yours! We shall then return to Paris, where we shall stay as long as Mr. Trollope's business will permit his absence, but this can only be to the end of October. I do hope and trust that nothing will prevent our having the happiness of seeing you here after our return—we shall have so much to talk of. . . .

Perhaps you will hear that we have been amusing ourselves during the boys' holidays by acting plays. Do not, however, fancy that I have been representing the *Margravine in little.* Our theatre is made in our drawing-room, and the object of it was to improve the French pronunciation of our children by getting up scenes from Molière. We have a French friend who plays with us, and it is really astonishing how much they have got on by his aid.

Adieu, dear friend. Present my compliments to Dr. and Mrs. Mitford, and believe me

Very affectionately yours, F. TROLLOPE.

P.S.—We set off on Monday.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Harrow, April 22, 1827.

I was very sorry that Mr. Trollope missed seeing you. It would have given him pleasure, and it would have given me news of you. Moreover, he would have canvassed you for a favor that I am now going to ask. Among the many young Frenchmen who have been exiled for wishing for more freedom than the Bourbon fools and knaves allowed, is an artist, who first became known to us as a drawing-master. If I have any knowledge of what is meant by the phrase *a man of genius*, I conceive it to belong to him; but he is totally and entirely *alone*, and unknown. His father, who was a colonel in the emperor's army, died in the retreat from Moscow, and left him no inheritance but debts. His only surviving relative is a rich priest—a Jesuit—whom, as you may well imagine, he has utterly offended. It would make your gentle heart ache if I were to tell you one quarter of what he has endured since he took refuge among us. How he has contrived to live I know not, but he has now a few pupils, and this has enabled him (by sometimes going without his dinner, to buy colors) to paint a picture, which has been received by the committee at Somerset House. It is not *my* judgment alone that I give you, when I say that this picture is *most admirable;* but I well know its merits will never be felt without the aid of the public press. I know you have influence enough with Mr. Walter to get it spoken of in the *Times*, and perhaps in some other publications. All I would ask is to direct attention to it; for I am *quite* sure that, if it is hung where it can be seen, it cannot be looked at without admiration. The picture will be called in the catalogue "Love and Folly," by A. J. J. Hervieu, No. 78 Newman Street. Will you then, dear friend, pardon all this long history, and try to aid by your influence a being who is worthy to call you friend—one day or other I shall hope to make him known to you.

Adieu. Give our kind compliments to your father, and believe me Ever affectionately yours,

F. TROLLOPE.

P.S.—And so you would not come to do chief lion at Miss Landon's. It was really a very smart party, though *some of us* did look rather queer. You need not talk of our democratic friend to any of our dear good Tory ones. They would groan in spirit, and think that Trollope, his wife, and all his children were going to destruction. Adieu.

Towards the end of 1828 "Rienzi" was performed at Drury Lane, the hero being played by Young, and the scenery painted by Stanfield. The heroine, Miss Phillips, was then only a girl of sixteen. The success proved great, and there was a long run of crowded houses. Miss Mitford received £400 from the theatre, and sold eight thousand copies of the play. "Rienzi" also became popular in America. It possessed considerable poetic beauty and dramatic power.

The following three letters relate to plays which Miss Mitford wrote: "Cromwell" (or "Charles I."), "Inez de Castro," and "Otto of Wittelsbach."

DR. MILMAN *to* MISS MITFORD.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I am quite ashamed of having kept your unread "Cromwell" so long, but I have been intending to bring it myself. The weather, however, during part of last week, and latterly, I grieve to say, Mrs. Milman's indisposition, have been insuperable impediments. Thank you for it. It is a strange, clever, absurd, lively, queer, farcical, indescribable production. It is impossible not to be amused—impossible not occasionally to admire. On the other hand, the *Liston* farce of part of it even exceeds my notion of the liberty of the *genre romantique*.

I heard from Harness. He is still unavoidably detained in town, but will really come as soon as he is at liberty.

Believe me, my dear Miss Mitford, ever very truly yours,

H. MILMAN.

Dr. Milman, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, was vicar of St. Mary's, Reading. Miss Mitford spoke in high terms of his reading and preaching, and upon his leaving wrote, "We

have lost our neighbor, Dr. Milman, who has got a London living. I would rather have lost a hundred stupid acquaintances than one friend so entirely after my own fashion."

C. Kemble *to* Miss Mitford.

Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,
Jan. 29, 1827.

My dear Madam,—On my return from Bristol, which will be in about eight days, I will rummage out what plays I have upon the subject of "Inez." My books being at present in utter confusion, it would take me more time than I can spare to find them before I leave town. The subject is very pathetic, and, I think, admits of strong and varied character. Has not Hayley, in one of his plays, drawn such a deformity as you propose for Mr. Warde? I am almost sure he has; and, if my conjecture be well founded, will it be prudent to follow an unsuccessful example? My wife and daughter send you their best compliments, and beg you to believe they will have great pleasure in seeing you on your next visit to London. With respects to the doctor, I must conclude this hasty scrawl.

I am always, my dear madam,

Yours most faithfully,

C. Kemble.

C. M. Young *to* Miss Mitford.

Nov. 21, 1828.

Dear Miss Mitford,—Your plot of "Otto" is returned to me without remark, except to beg that you would go on with the writing it as fast as you can; and which of the many alterations (you offer obligingly to make in the melodrama) he will accept I know not, but I think the part will fall to Miss Love, and 'tis time enough to settle about alterations when the period of producing the piece shall approach. At present we are up to our necks (that is, not I, but they) with the "Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green" and the Christmas pantomime. I'm playing ill, or I'd run down to Three-mile Cross. I've no comfort but "Our Village," which I eat like

an epicure, bit by bit, to prolong the meal—beautiful, quite beautiful, dear madam.

Yours faithfully, C. M. YOUNG.*

The following is interesting as showing the manner in which Mrs. Hemans first became acquainted with Miss Mitford ("Our Village" had been published in 1824):

MRS. HEMANS *to* MISS MITFORD.

Rhyllon, St. Asaph, June 6, 1827.

MADAM,—I can hardly feel that I am addressing an entire stranger in the author of "Our Village," and yet I know it is right and proper that I should apologize for the liberty I am taking. But really, after having accompanied you, as I have done again and again, in "violeting," and seeking for wood-sorrel—after having been with you to call upon Mrs. Allen in "the dell," and becoming thoroughly acquainted with May and Lizzie—I cannot but hope that you will kindly pardon my obtrusion, and that my name may be sufficiently known to you to plead my cause. There are writers whose works we cannot read without feeling as if we really *had* looked with them upon the scenes they bring before us, and as if such communion had almost given us a claim to something more than the mere intercourse between authors and "gentle readers." Will you allow me to say that *your* writings have this effect upon me, and that you have taught me, in making me know and love your "Village" so well, to wish for further knowledge also of *her* who has so vividly impressed its dingles and copses upon my imagination, and peopled them so cheerily with healthful and happy beings? I believe, if I could be personally introduced to you, that I should in less than five minutes begin to inquire about Lucy, and the lilies of the valley, and whether you had succeeded in peopling

* The biography of this celebrated actor has been written by his son, the Rev. Julian Young. Fanny Kemble writes: "Young had handsome, regular features, of the Roman cast, and a deep, melodious voice, but no tragic mental element whatever, but great comic power of mimicry. He was a cultivated musician, and very popular in the best society. He made £4000 per annum."

that "shady border" in your own territories with those shy flowers.

My boys, the constant companions of my walks about *our* village, and along our two pretty rivers, the Elwy and the Clwyd, are not less interested in your gypsies, young and old, your heroes of the cricket ground, and, above all, Jack Hatch. Woful and amazed did they all look when it was found out at last that Jack Hatch could die!

But I really must come to the aim and object of this letter, which I fear you may almost look upon as "prose run mad." I dare say you laugh sometimes, as I am inclined to do myself, at the prevailing mania for autographs, but a very kind friend of mine in a distant county does no such thing, and I am making a collection for him, which I should think (and he too, I am sure) very much enriched by your name. If you do me the favor to comply with this request, it will give me great pleasure to hear from you under cover to the Bishop of St. Asaph, 78 Gloucester Place, Portman Square, to whom I should have sent this letter to be franked, but that, being ignorant of your address, I am obliged to intrust it to a bookseller in town.

With sincere esteem, I beg you to believe me, madam,

Your faithful servant, F. HEMANS.*

Miss Mitford writes in 1836: "On her dying-bed Mrs. Hemans used to recur to my descriptions of natural scenery, and meant, if she lived, to have inscribed a volume to me. She was a charming woman, and so is my friend Mary Howitt." Mrs. Hemans wrote several letters to Miss Mitford, some of which were published in Mrs. Hemans's "Life" by Mr. Chorley.

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* By a curious coincidence the signature to this letter has been cut off for an autograph.

CHAPTER VII.

MISS MITFORD'S SUITORS. — LETTER FROM A STRANGER. — LETTERS FROM DYCE, YOUNG, MRS. HOFLAND, AND MRS. HALL.—POETICAL ADDRESS BY MISS S. STRICKLAND.

THE remark has often been made that we meet with no romance in Miss Mitford's history—no trace of even a passing predilection or an unfortunate attachment. In her earlier years she was sometimes twitted about partialities for her cousin Bertram Mitford and others, but no impression seems to have been made. That she was so far heart-whole was evident, for she could be jocose on the subject. She says that General Donkin* wanted his son to marry her, and speaks in 1818 of an American "who was a sort of lover of mine some seven or eight years ago"—when she was about twenty-three—"but who had the good luck to be drowned instead of married." When the family were turned out of Bertram House by Mr. Elliott, she writes: "But for the ill-luck of his having a wife, I need not move at all, since he says, had it not been for that misfortune, he would have married me himself. He is a little, mean-looking Bond-street shopkeeper of sixty-five, with a Methodist face, all bile and wrinkles and sadness, and a spruce wig in fine curls, shining like a horse-chestnut. I would certainly have married him, though."

There were afterwards great difficulties in the way of any matrimonial settlement. The family had sunk from opulence until her parents had become in a great measure dependent upon her, and nothing would have induced her to leave them. Suitors would have had before them the prospect of supporting a penniless old man with extravagant ideas, to whom his daughter was blindly devoted. Miss

* Perhaps Sir William Elford alludes to this in asking about the "Quartermaster" in his letter of April 9, 1812.

Mitford possessed the attractions of worth and genius, but a lover is not guided by such advantages, and would perhaps have required stronger attractions than a stout figure and a pleasant intellectual countenance. From those who knew her circumstances no offers seem to have come, but the following letter of admiration from a stranger, raised to enthusiasm by her literary talent, is too characteristic to be omitted:

Govan, Dec. 31, 1827.

DEAR MADAM,—I remember quite well sending you a letter long ago, but nothing more; for, to tell you the truth, it was written under an hallucination. You cannot believe how much pain the reflection cost me, having no recollection of what I said, and fearing I may have spoken indecorously to you. But as this is our Hogmanay,* I have got somewhat elevated in spirit, and feel disposed to write to you again, without fashing myself at all about what I said before.

Dear madam, excuse my freedom, but I love you with all my soul. Since I was fifteen, I had a vast number of loves, that is, I have at no time been destitute of a dreaming passion for some one or other, without going farther; but *you*, for more than this year back, have been my beau-ideal, and are likely to continue so, because my love for you is founded on realities, and not on imaginings, as the others were. I have never seen you: to see you might make me love you more, but could not possibly make me love you less; for it is your heart, feelings, thoughts, genius, that I love—they accord so beautifully with my own. I sometimes think you are me. I mean—though I could no more write like you than fly—that, if I could write, I would write exactly the same. Now what puzzles me is this: I wonder how you can possibly be a woman. I never saw a celebrated female writer in my life. Of how you look, and how you conduct yourself in private and among friends, I cannot form the slightest conception. Male authors one has some idea of; I have seen two, that is all—Sir Walter Scott, and Mr. Jeffreys in the

* The last day of the year.

Court of Sessions once three years ago—but you go beyond my grasp. There is Miss Baillie, and Mrs. Hemans, and Miss Landon, and yourself—these are all I remember. I am not *very* anxious to see Miss Baillie (I suppose she's a sort of nun) nor Mrs. H. (I take her to go swimming like a fine tragic queen), nor Miss L. Yes, I would like very well to see her, though I care little for her poetry. But you, above all things in the world, I would like to see—and next to that I would like to know the particulars of your life. There is nobody in this village can tell me anything about you. The minister himself is grossly ignorant. We have not now got a circulating library. It was too near Glasgow to thrive, and I am noways acquainted in Glasgow. I am, therefore, famishing for the want of books. I have to pick up all my news of literature from the newspapers. I saw a delightful piece of yours quoted there lately from a book called "The Coronet, or Literary and Christian Remembrancer." It was entitled "Fanny's Fairings," and how I did "Ho! ho!" with Tommy Stokes! My mother thought I was getting crazed. I wish you knew my mother. A better woman does not breathe, but I doubt I have broke her heart. It was all her wish and ambition to see me wag my pow in a pulpit; but to be a minister dressed in black all the days of my life, and obliged to preach and pray whether I felt disposed or not, I could not think of it. I would rather have taken the red coat. So here I am with my mother in our own little house, attempting to learn the weaving, with a view of commencing manufacturing by-and-by in the famous city of Glasgow. It is well I don't need to depend upon it, for I am singularly lazy, especially in fine weather, and vastly prefer a loiter by Cruikstane Castle, or a danner* by Kelvin-side to anything else. Were you ever in Scotland? It is a foolish notion—but could anything be more beautiful than the thought of you (a fine English lady) asking your way to our house, and I putting you on your right path, knowing you afterwards to be Miss Mitford. Or—what is better—suppose you storm-stead, and

* A saunter.

obliged to seek shelter with us. Oh, delicious! To see you sitting at the fireside, cracking with my mother, while I would be ransacking the presses for everything drinkable and eatable. In such dreams I am forever indulging. I have bought a copy at last of "Our Village," and am never done reading it. I read it aloud, every word, to my mother; but I will not tell what she said of it. She thinks it her duty to discountenance all novels; but when she begins one, she is as bad as myself. "Pamela" is her delight. Now I must not hide what she said of "Our Village," for I know you cannot be offended at an old woman's prejudices. She said it was unco clever—just extraordinar clever—but she thought you was a wee glaiket. She could not see how you could set up your face in the clachan* after exposing so many characters. I said that much of it might be fanciful, and that the characters were probably disguised. "Then it's no true," said she, "I canna believe that, for I hae seen the like o' Hannah mysel', and that hempie† Cousin Mary, everybody maun ken her."

You must think me impertinent, and so I am, on paper. To-morrow is New-year's day. I will drink your health for the hundredth time. Excuse me. If I were sure this letter would reach you, I would have taken pains, but I have gone on rum-strum, and find myself at the bottom.

I am, with deep admiration and attachment,

Your humble servant till death,

C. G.‡

P.S.—The minister thinks you must be a daughter of Mr. Mitford who wrote the "History of Greece."

[Writing ten years later, Miss Mitford says, "It is most certain that I shall never marry; at my age it would be most foolish, even if any one were simple enough to desire so old and ugly a wife. There is no sight so melancholy

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* Village. † Roguish.

‡ The name has been torn off this letter, perhaps by Miss Mitford.

as a wedding; and when there is no money the thing is worse."

Towards the end of her life Miss Mitford's fondness for the drama brought her into connection with some gifted actors, and there was one for whom she certainly expressed great admiration. In her letters to Miss Jephson forwarded to me, that lady has invariably erased several lines where that gentleman is mentioned. But it has been stated on good authority, and I believe correctly, that she merely appreciated his professional talent.]

ALEXANDER DYCE *to* MISS MITFORD.

London, 72 Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, Oct. 20, 1828.

DEAR MADAM,—Accept my best thanks for the copy of "Rienzi," and allow me to assure you that it has not been thrown away, for, as Harness can bear witness, I can repeat long passages of it by heart. I have now the pleasure of forwarding to you the volumes I mentioned. If you were a mere poetical antiquary, and valued what was rare more than what was excellent, I should expect that Peele would find great favor in your sight, for of some of his pieces (now for the first time repeated) not more than two copies exist. Still I think that whoever reads his works with the hope of finding poetry in them will not be utterly disappointed. Recollect that he wrote at a time when there was no English drama worth copying; and you will surely be forced to allow that he possessed considerable genius.

"The Old Wives' Tale" (which everybody had heard of, but nobody had seen till my reprint appeared) is very interesting, as having most probably furnished hints to Milton for his "Comus." I take the liberty of sending with "Peele" another small volume, which I published some time ago. You will not, I trust, be very angry with me when you find that it contains some of your own verses; but I must account to you for having selected what you perhaps think an unfavorable specimen of your poetry. Though the volume bears date 1827, it was printed several years earlier, and lay in sheets at the printer's, owing to the

pecuniary difficulties of my publisher, till my patience was almost exhausted. At the time I put its contents together you had not written, at least not published, those smaller poems, some of which would have suited my purpose so well. Believe me, dear madam, very faithfully,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEXANDER DYCE.

The Rev. Alexander Dyce was the well-known editor of "Shakespeare" and of the elder dramatists.* The allusion at the end of the above letter is to some specimens of our "English Female Poets," published by him. Mr. Harness introduced him to Miss Mitford, who said she felt highly honored by his approval of "Rienzi."

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM *to* MISS MITFORD.

27 Belgrave Place, Nov. 21, 1828.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I thank you for your kind and candid letter. I shall be silent, you may be assured of that, and am indeed glad that you think as I do respecting the "Annuals." I beg you will be mine exclusively next year—we shall not disagree about the terms. I shall want something like a couple of stories and a little dramatic scene; but of this we can talk when the time comes. My scheme is to secure the constant and exclusive help of four or five authors of fame and name, pay them well, obtain a certain quantity in their best manner from them, and then make out the book with my own hand and the help of a few other friends.

I shall not hurry you for the tale for volume second. I cannot begin to print before April or May. The book will be out on Tuesday; but before then a copy will be on its way to you; a copy also goes to the king. Our friend the *Scotsman* speaks highly of your communication to me. I have to send him your address, that he may send you a paper whenever he praises you. I think, from his admiration of your writings, you will see many of his papers. He feels the right-hearted, straightforward English character of your

* He left his valuable library to the South Kensington Museum.

compositions, and that you never write for words, but for ideas.

My wife unites with me in love and esteem, and in assurance of lending tongue and voice to the furtherance of your new play when it is represented. Nothing, indeed, could be more successful than "Rienzi," and it reads better than it acts. I am, my dear Miss Mitford,

Yours very faithfully,

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

Allan Cunningham, a native of Scotland, was a poet, novelist, and sculptor. He published a "History of British Painters," etc.

C. M. YOUNG *to* MISS MITFORD.

Dec. 20, 1828.

MY DEAR MADAM,—"Rienzi's" twentieth night went off to an admirable audience, and was extremely applauded. Your difficulties about "Otto" I feel. I think he must not be Brunswick, I think he must not be killed *on the stage*, because he is an emperor, and because we have a licenser—mum! I wish you were not forty miles off; so many things come into one's head to say when one is absent which will not, from pure perverseness, "come to your call" when most needful. One thing I'll mention—with all we can do, cutting and clipping, speaking fast and with energy, speaking slow and with pathos, however it may be, the devil a bit can we help the last scene of Claudia dragging, *dragging*, DRAGGING! I think it is because *the Event* (a small matter of Execution) is in process, as well the audience know; whilst Claudia is talk, *talk*, TALKING! Now, when the audience is in the scent of any incident, I don't think they like suspense! Am I wrong? I only mention, be it right or wrong, that you may think of it whilst composing fresh matter. If you agree with me, you'll avoid it again; if you don't, why then you'll do it again. "Words *is* no blows, and speaking don't break no bones!" as an erudite farmer once told me.

The postman rings! The bell, the bell, the mighty bell! Adieu, dear madam. Success to your pen.

Your faithful servant, C. M. YOUNG.

Through the Hoflands Miss Mitford had become acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall about the year 1826. Mrs. Hall was now writing her celebrated "Sketches of Irish Character." She dedicated this work to Miss Mitford, and observes, "My first dear book was inspired by a desire to describe my native place as Miss Mitford had 'Our Village.'" The following letter, written at this time, has been kindly contributed by Mr. S. C. Hall:*

MRS. HOFLAND *to* MRS. S. C. HALL.

23 Newman Street, March 3, [1829].

Och! to be shure, my dear honey, and it's your own swate self that is quite ignorant of the most wonderfullest, astonishing surprise that is just come upon a body, and that has done a body's heart good to think about—an' nivver a word the spalpeen rascals i' the *Times* has tould us about it, becase, you see, she commanded her nibors (the faather and thim) to hould their black and white tongues, and never mintion the particklar case. But as to not tellin' o' you, my dare, all as I jist happen to know why, it's out o' the question, honey—so here goes. Miss Mary Mitford is married, honestly married to one of her own kith and kin, a true Mitford of Northumberland, tho' his relationship is a mighty way off. An' he have taken her down to his own fine estate, a noble ould mansion, an' made her, who was a rale lady, jist asy for the rest of her days, an' her parents asy too, an' if that isn't good news, what is, honey dear?

My dear Mrs. Hall, in plain English, this is the fact, not communicated to me by her, for she has not told any living creature, for what reason I do not know, but I conjecture that it may not interfere with arrangements respecting her forthcoming tragedy. I have no doubt that the song† printed in your excellent magazine (for it is, so far as I have seen, as good as the first) was written in reference to this

* Between 1829 and 1832 Miss Mitford frequently wrote for Mrs. Hall's "Juvenile Forget-me-not," her fellow-contributors being Mrs. Hemans, Miss Strickland, Mary Howitt, Mrs. Opie, Hannah More, etc.

† The song begins—

"And art thou come back safe again
From over the salt sea?"

gentleman, who was attached to her in early life, but could not then marry, and whom she had not seen for many years till within a very few weeks. The marriage and all the arrangements have been kept a profound secret, and they are gone to his seat in Northumberland. The friend who told me mentioned it a fortnight ago in confidence. We had it from Mr. Mitford's brother, an officer, who, I believe, is sorry it takes place, because people don't like bachelor brothers who are wealthy to marry, otherwise he has all respect for the lady's talents and character. They are perfectly suited in age. He is a man of great ability, and proud of her fame, so that there is every prospect of happiness. It will surprise many—people concluded that at her age, and with her genius, the men would have

"Left her alone in her glory."

I am glad there was one found who knew better. No woman wanted a friend more, or deserved one better; and I sincerely thank God she has found such a friend, and, knowing your heart and mine beat alike on the subject, I could not forbear telling you the news hot and hot.

Mr. Hall's true tale* does him honor for its selection and its telling, and it will do good, I am confident, which is what he most desires—yours is as good as Miss Edgeworth's best. I shall be most happy to see you. I have been poorly, but am better. The house is like a fair, with pictures going in to the Suffolk-street Gallery, and the business of secretaryship; and I am writing, when I can write, no less a thing than a novel of three volumes, an undertaking I wonder I have courage for. Give my kind regards to Mr. Hall and Mrs. Fielding, and believe me very truly and with every good wish, Your faithful B. Hofland.

Mrs. Hofland *to* Miss Mitford.

[1829.]

My dear Friend,—Mr. Ackerman has just sent me this parcel to forward to you, and as I was on the point of writ-

* "A Scene of Every-day Occurrence," which, together with one of Mrs. Hall's "Sketches of Irish Character," appeared in Mr. Hall's magazine (the *Spirit and Manners of the Age*) for March, 1829.

ing to the doctor to inquire after you, I think it better to send with the parcel that inquiry, which I can no longer withhold. I have loved you too long and too well to sustain the solicitude which belongs to uncertainty any longer: are you married or not?

A month ago, I was told as *a secret* that you were on the point of marriage with a gentleman of your own family whom you had not seen for many years, but who had loved you all this time; he was a man of great literary taste, landed property, excellent character, and, in short, all one's heart could ask for. Then I was told "to look in the papers for three successive days, and I should be sure to see it." I did not find it, and I saw my informer, and said so. The answer was, "But the marriage *has taken place*, and Miss Mitford, now Mrs. Mitford, has gone down to Northumberland. I had it from the gentleman's own brother, who is Captain Mitford. My first informer was young Taylor, who is, I believe, very distantly related to Miss Mitford, but naturally proud of the alliance with her cousin; and I now tell you *positively* she is married, and gone to the mansion-house of her husband, which is a very pretty place, and you may rest satisfied she is in every sense of the word *well married*, for the gentleman complied with every wish of her heart as to settlements and all that. All the world will know it soon, but they have been particularly private."

This was Mr. Lane's news. Well, whilst I was for the first time rejoicing in the "*certainty* of wakening bliss" on this account, comes a magazine from Mrs. Hall, in which I found a song from Miss Mitford, which formed the best possible comment on the news; so down I sat, and wrote to Mrs. Hall, telling *her* that she might be happy too; and at home we talked of nothing else for two or three days—but on the fourth came Frederick with a grave face, saying "the whole matter must be a mistake; that a Captain Mitford had married a Miss Frances Mitford, and taken her to his seat in Northumberland, was *certain*, but it was utterly unlikely two gentlemen should have *both* married wives of their names and journeyed northward the same week; and that he was fully persuaded, in short, *our* Miss Mitford was still the wise

woman he believed her to be." Well, this plagued me all day yesterday after I heard it, and this morning comes Mrs. Hall, who says her husband spoke last night to Mr. Martin, whom he saw in the House, on the subject. Mr. M. said, "Miss Mitford is not yet married, but she is engaged, and it will take place soon"—he heard no more.

Mrs. Hall will write you, for she wishes to dedicate her new book to you. Mr. Ackerman desires I will try to persuade you to send a good budget for both his annuals; but if you are really going to take him, "who is come home with a kind heart and free," I fear you will do but little in that way.

"Rienzi" is performing to-night (by special desire). I was so ill of a cold and hoarseness, which confined me, I think, for five weeks, that I had no chance of getting to see your picture within *the time*, which vexed me much, and disappointed Mrs. Hawkins, who was to have gone with me to Kensington.

Well, now, I don't ask for any particulars—indeed, it seems Mr. M. must know, and that you are not married, but, it seems, will be soon. God grant you may be most happy, as I have no doubt you will be. Perhaps Mr. M. may not know, after all. People are so occupied with this awful question—all else seems forgotten.

Mr. H. is perpetually engaged at this vile gallery, which never did him any good, nor ever will. We are all better in health. I trust you all keep well. I am aware it is a time of great trial to you all; it must be so even with the happiest prospects. My prayers and every affection go with you.

B. Hofland.

Mrs. Hofland seems to have had a feminine weakness for marrying her friends, for she wrote to Miss Mitford on another occasion that Miss Edgeworth was going to be married to her (Miss Edgeworth's) stepmother's father!

Mrs. Trollope *to* Miss Mitford.

Cincinnati, Jan. 20, 1829.

I believe, my dear friend, that you were once among the short-sighted mortals who deemed me in the worst stage of

lunacy when I left the Old World to pay a visit to the New; but as the wreath of bays you wear has never, as I think, impeded one glance of kindness from your friendly eye towards the ordinary working-day mortals who surround you, so neither have your many and absorbing occupations been able to make you forget those you have honored by the name of friend. Let me, then, repass in fancy the Atlantic to greet you; let me tell you that I never see a paper professing to give literary news from England without anxiously looking for your name. I have read whole pages of extracts from the Annuals and "Our Village"—so well do the savages know how to make their papers sell—but I have not seen, what I chiefly sought, any account of the appearance of the noble tragedy, three acts of which you read to me when I last saw you. Our dear little Marianne writes me word that she believes Young is going to play "Rienzi." I know there *is* great power in that man, when he is warmed sufficiently to put it forth. Write to me, dear friend, I entreat you, in this remote but very pretty nest, where I am sitting to hatch golden eggs for my son Henry. A letter from you would be like the first warm bright sunbeam after a long dreary winter. Yet is the country beautiful, and wonderful in its rapid progress towards the wealth and the wisdom, the finery and the folly, of the Old World; and I like it well—the better, certainly, that while Henry is making money I am saving it; but, alas! there are no Mary Mitfords, no Marianne Skerretts here, and I do sometimes languish for that fine full flow of London talk which Johnson describes.

We are not, however, without our lions. Miss Wright, to visit whose residence was one of my inducements to cross the Atlantic, has abandoned for the present (and, as I think, forever) her scheme of forming an Eden in the wilderness, and cultivating African negroes till they produced accomplished ladies and gentlemen. She is now devoting all the energy of her extraordinary mind to the giving of public lectures through all the cities of the Union. Her subject is *Just Knowledge*, and in strains of the highest eloquence she assures the assembled multitudes that throng to hear her that man was made for happiness, and enjoyed it till religion

snatched it from him, leaving him fantastic hopes and substantial fears instead. I am told that she means to repeat her lectures through England and France. Wild, and often mischievous, as her doctrines are, she is a thing to wonder at, and you must hear her, if you can.

Henry's prospects here are, I think, very good; but eighteen is too young to be left, too young to be judged of fixedly. I believe him to be very steady, but I must watch by him for a year or two longer. I think Mr. Trollope returns to us next year, and I shall then be able to decide whether it will be advisable to continue here or not. My girls have very good masters, and I know that they are not losing their time. *Nothing* shall keep me here after my eldest girl is sixteen—at least, nothing that I can possibly foresee or imagine, as I think I owe it to her to let her see young ladies' daylight in a civilized country.

Oh, my dear friend, had I but the tenth of an inch of the nib of your pen, what pictures might I draw of the people here—so very queer, so very unlike any other thing in heaven above or earth below! But it may not be. I can look and I can laugh, but the power of describing is not given to above half a dozen in a century.

Will you accept, during my absence, of my eldest son *as a friend and enthusiastic admirer?* I pray you do. I cannot describe to you the earnestness with which he desires this. He is immediately to be entered as a student at Lincoln's Inn—and, poor fellow, he means to be a good boy and a lawyer—but his heart and soul are literary, and all the consolation he can receive under his enforced studies will, and must be, derived from letters. Will you, dear friend, receive him among your *friends?*—let him be your slave and servant for all and any of your London affairs; and if you find him a faithful and useful servant, pay him by a chat or a line, when your leisure serves. I *think* there is some soul in him, but I remember that I am a Nemo, and will not rest too firmly on my own judgment. Pray remember me very kindly to Dr. and Mrs. Mitford, and believe me very affectionately yours,

F. Trollope.

ARCHDEACON WRANGHAM *to* MISS MITFORD.

Chester, Feb. 21, 1829.

DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Mr. Goodlake, in reply to a suggestion of mine, informs me that he has already sent you one of the copies of the book to which in every sense you are so abundantly entitled. I trust you will think it, to use the technical phrase, "well got up." Mr. Goodlake's generous purpose to transmit the net produce to Mrs. Barnard, who with her three tender orphans is but ill provided for, deserves and has our warmest gratitude.

If I were an official man, with the butterflies I should enclose my letter to my clergy of the archdeaconry of the East Riding of Yorkshire on the Catholic subject, as I declined calling them together, and have since *ostensibly*—for I was in the minority *of one* in the Chapter—concerned in an anti-Catholic petition. I thought it due not only to myself, but to them, to explain both what was the real state of the case, and upon what views my conduct had for thirty years been uniformly in favor of the claims. However, as I possess no privilege of the franking kind, I fear my donation and your curiosity (if you feel any upon this head) must undergo a little suspension.

I shall not, I fear, get to town this spring, though invited both by my old friend and constant host, Basil Montagu, to Bedford Square, and by my gay statesman and his wife to Wilton Crescent. But new-furnishing a drawing-room at this place, and taking possession (at a great expense) of a new and almost incomeless archdeaconry, besides a heavy subscription towards repairing the woful calamity of York Minster, will make me too poor for London; or I should consider it one of my first pleasures there to find out Mr. Lucas. Your character of him as an artist, and also as a man, would entitle him, independently of my wish to see your *very self*,* to my earliest attention. But *I* too must wait for more auspicious circumstances. I remain, however, dear Miss Mitford,

Ever yours most truly, F. WRANGHAM.

* Referring to Lucas's portrait of Miss Mitford.

MRS. HALL *to* MISS MITFORD, *Three-mile Cross, Reading.*

April 28, 1829.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I trust you will find nothing in my "Sketches of Irish Character" to offend your political feelings. I can love a Catholic as well as a Protestant, although I think we ought to have kept the upperhand with them. However, I care naught about the matter, except as far as it vexes my much-respected friend Mr. Sadler, who unites fine mental qualities to one of the most noble and yet simple hearts in the world.

Miss Smyth's album is quite safe, but the fact is we wished to enlarge it by the addition of some very pretty pictures. I found I could not paste them neatly in, so I took the liberty of placing them properly, and then getting all *re*-bound together, which is much the best way. I know she will not be angry at this, if *you* make a pretty speech about it for me, and I assure you every portion of the book is preserved with the greatest care. Westley says I shall have it back in ten days, and then it shall be left in Printing House Square, as you directed.

Dear Mrs. Hofland spent an evening with us lately. I wish you had been of the party. I am going to spend a few days with our friends the Carnes at Blackheath. I suppose you know his "Tales from the West." They are very hospitable, nice people, and you meet *everybody* (literary) at his house.

I have not time to enlarge my epistle, but conclude, requesting you to accept "lots" of love from us all. I finished my last tale, "Peter the Prophet," last night.

Most affectionately, my dear Miss Mitford,

Your sincere ANNA MARIA HALL.

MISS STRICKLAND *to* MISS MITFORD.

Reydon Hall, near Wangfield, Suffolk, June 2, 1829.

TO MISS MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

Thy "sister poetess," thou gifted one!
Never for me will lyre like thine be strung;
Never to me will Nature teach the art

To sketch the living portrait on the heart;
With her own magic pencil to portray
The storms and sunshine of life's varied day,
The fond anticipations, hopes, and fears
That gladden youth, or shade our riper years;
With Nature's untaught eloquence to trace
The joys and sorrows of a fallen race,
Till the heart's fountains at thy page run o'er;
We know the author, and the scene adore.
From infancy my steps have wandered far
Through flowery fields, beneath Eve's dewy star,
And I have flung me on the earth's green breast,
Till my heart heaved against the sod I press'd,
And tears of rapture blinded fast the sight
Of eyes that ached with fulness of delight.
In this our souls are kindred, for I love
The flowing corn-field and the shady grove,
The balmy meadow and the blossom'd thorn,
The cool fresh breezes of the early morn,
The crimson banner of the glowing west
Flung o'er the day-god, as he sinks to rest;
The witching beauty of the twilight hour
In hazel copse, green dell, or woodland bower;
The plaintive music of the wind-stirr'd trees,
The song of birds, the melody of bees;
The kine deep lowing on the marshy mere,
The sheep-bell tinkling on the common near;
The reaper's shout, the sound of busy flail,
The milk-maid singing o'er her flowing pail;
The voice of ocean heaving in my view,
Reveal'd through waving boughs in robe of blue.
Or when the moon has risen high and bright,
Girdling the east with belt of living light.
'Mid Nature's solitude my days have pass'd;
Here would I live—here breathe in peace my last!
Fame is a dream! the praise of man as brief
As morning dew upon the folded leaf;
The summer sun exhales the sparkling tear,
And leaves no trace of its existence here—
That world I once admired I now would flee,
And to win heaven would court obscurity.

SUSANNA STRICKLAND.*

This Miss Strickland, a sister of the celebrated authoress, married eventually a Mr. Moodie, author of "Ten Years in

* There are references to this poem on page 149.

South Africa," and emigrated to Canada. In her work, "Roughing it in the Bush," she gives a most discouraging account of the miseries to be endured in colonial life by those who have been accustomed to the refinements of civilization. She wrote songs which became very popular in Canada.

MR. BARNES *to* MISS MITFORD.

Tuesday, July 14, 1829. 48 Nelson Square.

MY DEAR MADAM,—I am very sorry that you have had the trouble of writing an explanatory letter, though I must always be pleased to receive any communication from you. Dr. Mitford has misunderstood my meaning. Having heard that you had finished two tragedies, I asked, with an interest which it is impossible for any one who has seen and read "Rienzi" not to feel, when either of them was likely to appear. Dr. Mitford then told me of the impediments which had been offered to the representation of "Charles I." I observed that such an opposition was the more absurd as there was already a tragedy with that title, which had been acted without scruple above fifty years ago. Dr. Mitford then proposed to favor me with a perusal of your tragedy, which, of course, I was happy to accept, though, at the same time, I expressed considerable apprehension for the safety of the manuscript, should it have to travel backwards and forwards from Berkshire to London.

This, as well as I can recollect, is the substance of the conversation to which your letter refers. I will add that I fully appreciate the justice of the reasons which you urge against any public allusion (at least at present) to the conduct of the licenser. I need not say how proud I should be to express publicly as well as privately my great admiration of your extraordinary talents—allow me to add, not even yet developed to the full extent of which they are capable; but I know well, what you accurately describe, the necessity of "bending to the various difficulties that beset a dramatic writer." I think, too, that there is some loss of the dignity of a superior writer in appealing to the public for sympathy. Miss Mitford is in a condition to demand public admiration, not to solicit public compassion.

Mrs. Barnes, as well as myself, regretted greatly your absence last Saturday; she is very grateful for your kind remembrance, and very proud of your good opinion.

I am, with great esteem, your faithful servant,

F. BARNES.

Mr. Barnes was editor of the *Times*. Miss Mitford seems to have met him at Mr. Perry's.

The following is written in a round schoolboy hand, and undated. It is, however, interesting, and Miss Mitford's reference to it is quoted by Dean Stanley in the "Life of George Cotton, Bishop of Calcutta." She wanted for one of her plays "The Ban of the Empire," and after having fruitlessly inquired among her literary friends, German historians, and law professors, obtained it from a boy in these words:

G. E. LYNCH COTTON *to* MISS MITFORD.

St. Peter's College, Westminster, July 20.

MADAM,—Having understood from a friend that you wished to obtain the words of "The Ban of the Church of the German Empire," I take the liberty of sending them to you, and I hope you will find them correct. It is one of the earliest examples of this mode of proscription, and was launched against the Duke of Suabia: "We declare thy wife a widow, thy children orphans, and discard thee, in the devil's name, to the four corners of the earth!"

You will find it in "Les Anecdotes Germaniques," page 151, and as I have experienced so much pleasure from the perusal and representation of your beautiful tragedies, I shall have great satisfaction in being of the smallest use to you, and hope, as I have no other mode of conveyance, that you will not think me an intrusive schoolboy.

Allow me to remain, madam, your obedient servant,

GEORGE EDWARD LYNCH COTTON.

The above was written in 1829. Miss Mitford informed him in her reply that she wanted the actual German words, and those he shortly afterwards sent her. "We shall hear of that youth himself in literature some day or other," she observes.

CHAPTER VIII.

LETTERS FROM MRS. HOFLAND, MISS STRICKLAND, DOUGLAS JERROLD, MISS SEDGWICK, AND MRS. TROLLOPE.

MRS. HOFLAND *to* MISS MITFORD.

"WHO can write to me on *pink* paper, scented? Bless me, how it is perfumed!"

"Some magnificent *blue*, of course," said Hofland.

The letter was opened; your hand, my dear friend, was seen, and I said, "How could Miss Mitford think of sending such a *fine* lady as this must be here?"

"I don't see why she should not. She pays us the compliment of considering us a lion and lioness in one cage."

Thus stands the matter—Mrs. Morgan says "she will be here to-morrow at twelve," and will take charge of a letter to you; so I, at twelve at night (or after) write this note to be ready for her. My master goes off a-fishing* at six in the morning, and will, of course, not be seen, which is a sad reverse of the order of things, for he's quite a man to be exhibited to ladies who write on pink paper; and to all intents and purposes his wife is a thing to be hidden in any hole or corner, where all women are thrown. Certes, one less likely to please the fashionable and reward the fastidious could not be selected from the many who may now be found.

I grieve that you have been all ill, and I can well sympathize with you, though my *grand*, my *unceasing* object is for the present in a state of relief; but Tom, my dear little Tom, whom I love with such pity and such peculiar and, I fear, excessive feeling as few people can conceive, is in a deplorable state. He has got a white swelling in the knee,

* He wrote a work on angling, a sport of which he was very fond.

and it is an equal thing whether he *can* or *cannot* weather it. I am going to the sea with him soon;—we are under the care of Scott, of Bromley, a successful kind of half-quack, of whom you have heard. The child sleeps with me—leans on me for all his comfort. He can move a little on crutches, and his patience and cheerfulness, his delicacy and meekness, make him altogether the most affecting creature in the world. Indeed, there is an interest in his manners, and his talents too, which renders one inevitably superstitious. I feel sure he will be taken, but it may be long, very long, first.

I hear from Mrs. Hall you are getting on with the tragedy, but hindered by the annuals, which are, in fact, "plagues of the land." Nobody knows the miseries of writing to prints but those who do it, and my master cannot see this for a moment, and thinks I ought to do whatever is asked.

I think Mrs. Hall's book beautiful, but am not in love with her dedicatory letter; it is meagre.

In London all is misery, unmixed misery. There has been no such time in my life, though I remember much that was alarming. I think the misery may in a great measure be traced to the avarice and ambition of the trading world, who, in their *haste to be rich*, have drawn the poor to become manufacturers, who ought to have been agriculturists; worked too hard, overstocked the markets, and then thrown their tools out of employment, and, of course, into extreme misery. People may reason as they will, but *this* is the *true source* of the mischief. Had they gone on *moderately*, masters and men would alike have prospered, but, as the Bible says, "they made haste to be rich, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows;" this, and marrying soon, and getting children without end, has ruined the country, yet Thirlwall two years since told me "population was failing." What a fool, we are eaten up by multitudes.

I went to the Academy to look at you, and was vexed to see you stuck up at the top of the room, and so feebly painted the whole was lost. The figure is well managed, but the hat badly fixed; the likeness is unquestionably well preserved, and very agreeably given, but in its position the

painter, poor young man, received a great blow, which even the *Times's* praise cannot soften. The Academy folks are sad folks—cruel ones to many a clever young man.

With a thousand good wishes and kind regards,

Believe me, your truly affectionate

B. HOFLAND.*

P.S.—What a monstrous advantage those "Irish" writers have in their brogue.

The picture above mentioned was by Lucas, who was introduced to Miss Mitford by Mr. Milton, Mrs. Trollope's brother, one of his earliest patrons.

MISS STRICKLAND *to* MISS MITFORD, *Three Mile Cross, Reading.*

Reydon Hall, July 31, 1829.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Your kind and generous letter, while it afforded me the deepest pleasure, affected me almost to tears, so totally undeserving do I feel myself to be of so great and distinguished a favor. I can scarcely believe that it is to one so little known and who has such slight claims to literary merit that Miss Mitford has addressed herself in such friendly and liberal terms. I fancy you mistake me for my second sister, Agnes Strickland, the authoress of "Worcester Field," and the "Seven Ages of Woman," and many other minor poems that have appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* and the annuals, and who is a very talented and accomplished woman, quite the reverse of the plain, matter-of-fact country girl, her youngest sister, who is now writing to you.

My name is almost unknown to the world. A solitary piece of poetry in the "Pledge of Friendship" for 1828, a few stanzas in "Friendship's Offering" for this year, entitled "There's Joy," and some sketches from the country both in prose and verse, that have from time to time been inserted

* This letter was marked on the back "Honored by Mrs. Morgan," but that lady has crossed out the word "honored," and substituted "forgotten."

by my friend, Mr. Harral, in "La Belle," are all the articles of mine that ever came before the public with my name or initials appended to them. I candidly confess that I consider *none* of these worthy of notice, and they were written more with the view of serving several dear friends to whom I was tenderly attached than with any idea of establishing my reputation as an authoress. I cannot, therefore, appropriate to myself your flattering opinion of my merit, though I am not less gratified with the kindness and benevolence which induced you to give such encouragement to a young and nameless authoress to pursue her literary career.

You have written to me as a friend, and I shall reply to your kind queries with the same frankness with which I should answer an old and valued correspondent. I have been one of Fancy's spoiled and wayward children, and from the age of twelve years have roamed through the beautiful but delusive regions of Romance, entirely to gratify my restless imagination, to cull all that was bright and lovely, and to strew with flowers the desert path of life. I have studied no other volume than Nature, have followed no other dictates but those of my own heart, and at the age of womanhood I find myself totally unfitted to mingle with the world. I perceive with regret that I must hereafter render an account to my Creator for those precious hours and talents that were wasted in forming those vain theories, those fanciful dreams of happiness that have faded in my grasp. Experience has traced upon the tablets of my soul, with many tears, that

"There's nothing true but heaven."

A desire for fame appears to me almost inseparable from an author, especially if that author is a poet. I was painfully convinced that this was one of my besetting sins. You would have pitied my weakness could you have read my heart at the moment of receiving your sweet verses, directed in your own hand to me. I had always ranked Miss Mitford as one of the first of our female writers, and though my knowledge of your writing was entirely confined to the sketches in the annuals, and to some extracts from the "Foscari," these were sufficient to make me feel the deepest interest in your name, and even to rejoice in the success

that ever attended the publication of your works. But when you condescended to place me in the rank with yourself, all my ambitious feelings rose up in arms against me, till, ashamed of my vanity and presumption, I stood abashed in my own eyes, and felt truly ashamed of being so deeply enamored with a title I did not deserve, and I felt that that insatiable thirst for fame was not only a weak but a criminal passion, which, if indulged, might waken in my breast those feelings of envy and emulation which I abhor, and which never fail to debase a generous mind; conscious, too, that I had employed those abilities with which Heaven had endowed me, doubtless for a wise and useful purpose, entirely for my own amusement, without any wish to benefit or improve my fellow-creatures, I resolved to give up my pursuit of fame, withdraw entirely from the scene of action, and, under another name, devote my talents to the service of my God.

It was this determination which induced me to conclude the few lines I ventured to address to you in the manner I did; and could you read my mind, and enter fully into my motives for seeking to withdraw from all notoriety, I feel confident that I should gain from you, my dear Miss Mitford, an approving smile.

Mrs. Hemans is indeed a child of song—a complete mistress of the lyre. She possesses at all times the key of my heart. It will require another age to give birth to another Felicia Hemans!

Should I ever again visit London, I should indeed consider it a privilege to be allowed a friendly interchange of hands with Miss Mitford, an honor which a few months ago I should not have imagined it possible for me to expect, and which I do not deserve from any individual merit of my own, but owe entirely to your generosity.

I have pictured to myself your little cottage, and your poor lame maid Olive—"is it not Olive Hathaway?"—who is a great favorite of mine. And now, I almost fancy I see your surprise, but I cannot tell you now how I came to know your maid Olive. Should you ever visit the eastern coast of Suffolk, my mother, my sister, and myself would feel our-

selves highly honored by Miss Mitford becoming an inmate of our old-fashioned mansion. The country is well wooded, but flat, and is not remarkable for its picturesque scenery, though it abounds with such sweet woodland lanes as you so inimitably describe. Sometimes I think that you have rambled down all my dear old lanes, about which I could preach for an hour. Our coast is interesting, from the many beautiful and venerable relics of antiquity which form the chief attraction to strangers. The ruins of Dunwich, Covehythe, Walberswick, Blythburgh (which still contains the tomb of Ina, king of East Anglia), and Leiston Abbey, would not fail to excite your attention. But I must not dwell upon my favorite spots — spots endeared to me from infancy — but hasten to conclude this unceremonious epistle, which I hope my dear friend and yours, Mr. Pringle, will obtain a frank for; and with sincere wishes for your mother's health and your own, believe me, dear Miss Mitford, with a grateful sense of your kindness,

Your truly obliged friend,

SUSANNA STRICKLAND.

MR. WILLS *to* MISS MITFORD.

5 Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn,
Oct. 12, 1829.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I availed myself of the very first opportunity after my indisposition to witness the Juliet of Miss Fanny Kemble, in order that I might judge for myself whether all the good and civil things that were said and written of her were founded in fact, and, although I cannot go the lengths of some of her admirers, yet I have no scruple in affording her the rank of the very best actress since Miss O'Neill. Her peculiar forte to me seems to be a thorough legitimate, downright thick and thin *dash* sort of style—a fearful experiment, but perhaps justified by the vast capabilities of the aspirant. She has all the right points about her, or, as our emerald friends would say, she has the makings of an actress. In short, she is in the Siddonic school (an excellent one, certainly), but that is all. In person she is infinitely inferior to Miss Phillips, though both have bad *arms*

—the former round, red, and milk-maidish; the latter lean, long, and—but no matter for the other "and"—I am getting ungallant. Contrasting the two, the summary is this: Miss K. has grandeur of expression and action, Miss P. delicacy and softness, which will ever render her superior in the more pathetic walks of the drama. Had Miss P. the other's *power*, and the other Miss P.'s pathos, each and the other would be tremendous creatures, but at present Miss K. stands a very good chance of obtaining the highest rewards in theatrical ambition. This surely will make for you—for from what I have seen I should not hesitate to trust Inez to her keeping.

I intended last night to have witnessed the new tragedy of "Epicurus," by Mr. Leslie—do you know him?—but in consequence of the dying state of Mr. Wallack's eldest son, he is in such a distracted state of mind that at five o'clock the piece was obliged to be changed. Only think of the state of mind of the author. God be praised 'twas not your piece!

I saw "Rienzi" on Thursday, to which there was the best house (though not too good) of the season, excepting the opening night. Some of the business is advantageously altered. Miss P.'s action is improved, and Mr. Young as good and bad as usual.

There has been a Miss Forrest roaring through Ophelia like a town bull in a thunder-storm. I need not say I should like an opportunity of reading "Otto" as well as "Inez." Can you indulge me with convenience?

I am greatly obliged by the doctor's present. What about Cumberland? he says you have had fifty or sixty copies. I have just heard there is a new tragedy in Covent Garden ready for Miss K.—surely it can't be yours. Mrs. W.'s love and remembrances to all.

Believe me, most sincerely yours,

—— Wills.*

Mr. S. C. Hall *to* Miss Mitford.

2 East Place [1830?].

My dear Miss Mitford,—I am "perplexed in the extreme," and now know not what to do. When your first two

* The initials of the Christian name are illegible.

sheets came, I sent them to the printer, and had them *set.* When the last arrived, I felt that I should incur much danger in publishing it, because of its want of moral, or, rather, its prejudicial effect — which I knew *well* my readers would charge upon it. I, of course, allude to the conclusion, which describes a young couple as having deceived their parents, privately married, and pursued a course of deception. Now you will believe me, I know, when I state how deeply it distresses me to write thus—I am more vexed and grieved than I can tell you—but I have a very *peculiar* class to cater for, and this year there is a rival religious annual. I am, therefore, bound to be especially careful, and if you knew the tales in my former volumes that have been cavilled at, you would laugh at the cavillers and pity me. I must not, however—I dare not—run any *risk.*

Do not think ill of me; do not be much annoyed with me, for, in truth, I cannot help myself. Of course, my trouble does not arise from any fear of *inconveniencing* you, because you have too many, and not too few, sources by which your writing can be disposed of.

Now, to another matter. I shall be greatly disappointed, indeed, if my volume has nothing from your pen—for many *weighty* reasons. Can you, then, within ten days give me half a dozen pages of a village sketch?

I must leave this matter with you, but pray write me by the next post, for, in truth, I feel more vexed than I hope you can do.

With my wife's affectionate regards, believe me,

Ever faithfully and sincerely yours,

S. C. Hall.

Mr. S. C. Hall was at this time editor of the *Amulet*, a religious annual, which flourished from 1826 to 1836. Miss Mitford generally wrote for it, and among the other contributors were Bulwer, L. E. L., Lady Blessington, Mary Howitt, "Barry Cornwall," Mrs. Hofland, and Emma Roberts.

The next fragment refers to the stories of gypsies and of Grace Neville in "Our Village." The latter had a ragged boy who carried love-letters for her.

MISS STRICKLAND *to* MISS MITFORD.

There is another very interesting gypsy family of the name of Chilcot—ditto Barwell; perhaps you may have met them in their peregrinations. In your delightful sketch of Grace Neville I was much amused by the donkey messengers. Such mercuries are common in Suffolk, and I greeted your boys as old acquaintances. My eldest brother, who is settled in Upper Canada, was a famous cricket-player, and I used often by his earnest solicitations to walk across Southwold Common, to witness his dexterity, and I felt no small degree of interest in his *éclat.* He was a fine, handsome fellow, and promises to do something for himself in the country to which he has emigrated, and to which I often feel strongly induced to follow him, having many dear friends in that land "of the mountain and the flood." He gives me such superb descriptions of Canadian scenery that I often long to accept his invitation to join him, and to traverse the country with him in his journeys for Government. But I fear my heart would fail me when the moment of separation came, and my native land would appear more beautiful than any other spot in the world, when I was called upon to leave it. Yes, I do agree with you that a woman would miss the smile of affection more than all the applause of the world. I know I would rather give up the *pen* than lose the affection of my beloved sister Catherine, who is dearer to me than all the world—my monitress, my dear and faithful friend. She is the author of several popular works for children: "The Step-brothers," "Young Emigrants," "Juvenile Forget-me-not" (the first series), and many other works of the same nature. But it is not for her talents that I love my Kate, it is for herself. She is absent now for a few days, and I feel lost and lonely without her; she is the youngest of the six girls, next to me. We are all authoresses but Sarah, the third; but then she is a beauty, and such a sweet girl withal, that everybody loves her, and I often think she is the best off, for she has elegant tastes and pursuits, and no clashing interests interfere with the love her sisters bear to her. I am writing you a sad, egotistical letter; my tongue and my pen never

know when to lie still, and I quite forget your dignity as a celebrated writer when I am scribbling to you as a friend. Mr. Pringle will, I know, kindly enclose this in the next packet he transmits to you. In the meantime, believe me, dear Miss Mitford, to remain,

Your grateful and sincere friend,

SUSANNA STRICKLAND.

The following letter is interesting as having been written by Douglas Jerrold when he was a young and struggling author, shortly after the appearance of his successful drama, "Black-eyed Susan."

DOUGLAS JERROLD *to* MISS MITFORD.

4 Augustus Square, Regent's Park [1830].

MY DEAR MADAM,—May I be allowed to offer my sincere expressions of condolence for the loss you have so recently sustained, and to venture a hope of your timely recovery from the effects of so afflicting a visitation.*

That the dramas, which I have taken the liberty of intruding upon your notice, receive your commendation, is to me a subject of pride and pleasure: for, wanting the suffrages of the few, popular success is as empty as it is frequently unmerited.

Long before I could hope that any effort of mine would receive the attention of Mr. Talfourd, I had admired the acute, liberal, and dispassionate tone of that gentleman's criticisms; consequently I feel additional gratification from his praise in this month's *New Monthly*.† At the present ebb of dramatic criticism, when *ipse dixit*, not analysis, decides on the faults or merits of writers, it is most encouraging, especially to the young beginner, to know there is at least *one* publication where he may meet with fair and gentlemanly treatment. There is, too, another satisfaction to the

* The death of Mrs. Mitford.

† Mr. Talfourd says in this review: "We are quite sure that the gentleman who wrote this piece, 'Black-eyed Susan,' though he seems to have been unfortunate in his 'Witchfinder' at Drury Lane, will one day rank high among dramatists."

dramatist, who, at the outset, encounters the prejudice and ignorance of what is termed "daily and weekly criticism." He has but to make two or three fortunate hits—no matter whether borrowed from Messrs. Scribe or Mr. Colburn—to change unthinking abuse into equally ignorant encomium. With such critics, how short the pause from a hiss to a huzza!

My "Witchfinder" at Drury Lane was a decided failure. The subject was ill-chosen; for few who condemned it were aware that they were judging an attempted representation of historical character, but condemned it as a monstrous fiction. Neither had the piece one intrinsic advantage. Mr. Farren first injured it by his extravagant praise, and then made the mischief complete by his utter misconception of the part. Then came the learning, the intelligence, and the liberality of the newspapers. In the present day a moderately gifted dramatist has a pretty time of it: if he succeed, his piece has the immortality of a month—if he fail, his name is gibbeted in every journal as a dullard and a coxcomb. French melodramas have ruined us.

I have, madam, to apologize for inflicting so long a letter on your patience, and again repeating my wishes for your convalescence, and my acknowledgments of the honor which you have done me in the notice taken of my dramas (which, unless they be followed by much worthier things, I had rather had never been),

I remain, my dear madam,

Ever truly and obliged, DOUGLAS JERROLD.

The acquaintance between Miss Mitford and Miss Sedgwick commenced in the following manner:

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, June 7, 1830.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I cannot employ the formal address of a stranger towards one who has inspired the vivid feeling of intimate acquaintance, a deep and affectionate interest in her occupations and happiness. You cannot be ignorant that your books are reprinted and widely circulated

on this side of the Atlantic, but we all have dim impressions of the actual existence of those that are unknown and distant, and it is probably difficult for you to realize that your name has penetrated beyond our maritime cities, and is familiar and honored, and loved through many a village circle, and to the borders of the lonely depths of unpierced woods —that we eagerly gather the intimations of your character and history that we fancy are dispersed through your productions—that we venerate "Mrs. Mosse," are lovers of "Sweet Cousin Mary," and have wept, and almost worn mourning for dear, bright little "Lizzie"—that, in short, such is your power over the imagination that your pictures have wrought on our affections like realities. I have long been restrained only by fear of intrusion from expressing to you my admiration and gratitude—not merely my selfish gratitude for my own individual pleasure, but for the great good you have done to our race by elevating the humbler members of the human family above the mere subjects of our condescension and charity, and showing that they have abundant sources of independent, home, heartfelt happiness, which asks nothing of their superiors, and will receive nothing, unless it be such generous sympathy as yours. As the humblest artisan may in all humility offer a specimen of his wares, I have requested Mrs. Miller to send you a copy of "Clarence," a work which I have just published. It is not professedly a delineation of our scenery or manners, but, wherever they are incidentally introduced, I have endeavored to make the portrait accurate, neither exaggerating beauties nor veiling defects. My niece, a child nine years old, who is sitting by me, not satisfied with requesting that her *love* may be sent to Miss Mitford, has boldly aspired to the honor of addressing a postscript to her, and I, like any other doting aunt, and not forgetting who has allowed us a precedent for spoiling children, have consented to her wishes. Forgive us both, my dear Miss Mitford, and believe me sincerely

Your friend, CATHERINE M. SEDGWICK.

The following is the "postscript:"

My dear Miss Mitford, I cannot miss the opportunity my

aunt allows me of writing to the author of "Our Village," to express my interest in her, and in the perusal of her charming book, one of the most valuable in my library, which I have read several times, and at each repetition have experienced increased delight. How is "May Flower," the dog of whom you relate so many little anecdotes? or is she a mere chimera, a child of fancy? I do not particularly admire shadows, and, to tell the truth, I have some apprehensions of the celebrated hound's actual existence. And has Joel Brent's marriage turned out happily after all Harriet's coquetry? And sweet Dora Creswell, what has become of her? And where is Fanny, the pretty gypsy girl, with her husband, her old grandmother, and her two brothers? And where is Thomas Clere, the man whose wife died in his arms, in her excess of joy at his arrival? And where are Grace Neville, the old barber, and all the other interesting personages mentioned in your book? I think I hear you say, "This little girl asks too many questions," but I will put an end to them, and only add that I remain, my dear Miss Mitford,

Your devoted admirer, C. M. SEDGWICK, JUN.

PP.S.—I would have corrected this young lady's language, but I wished her postscript to have at least the merit of being the genuine offspring of her own mind, neither dictated nor retouched by an older hand.

Miss Mitford, in replying to Miss Sedgwick, Sept. 6, 1830, sent also an answer to her little niece's questions—

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I am very much obliged to you for your kind inquiries respecting the people in my book. It is much to be asked about by a little lady on the other side of the Atlantic, and we are very proud of it accordingly. "May" was a real greyhound, and everything told of her was literally true; but, alas! she is no more; she died in the hard frost of last winter. "Lizzie" was also true, and is also dead. "Harriet" and "Joel" are not married yet; you shall have the very latest intelligence of her; I am expecting

two or three friends to dinner, and she is making an apple-tart and custards—which I wish with all my heart that you and your dear aunt were coming to partake of. The rest of the people are doing well in their several ways, and I am always, my dear little girl,

Most sincerely yours, M. R. MITFORD.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Stonington Park, Washington City, July 28, 1830.

It is but a few days, my very dear friend, since I learned the death of your beloved mother. The remembrance of all you have been to her in life must be to you the sweetest consolation, now you have lost her. I trust that many months will not elapse after you receive this before I shall again be within the possibility and the hope of seeing you. I have nothing now to detain me but the waiting to know Mr. Trollope's final decision as to the necessity of his once more crossing the Atlantic to arrange himself the final settlement of our untoward speculation at Cincinnati, and my wish to see a few more of the wonders of this wonderful country.

I, too, am writing a book, my dear Miss Mitford, which, let its success among others be what it may, has helped to amuse me at many moments that would have passed heavily without it. Captain Hall's book (and himself too, by the way) has put the Union in a blaze from one end to the other. I never on any occasion heard so general an expression of contempt and detestation as that which follows his name. This hubbub made me very desirous of seeing his book, but I am glad to say I did not succeed till after my first volume was finished, and most of the notes for the second collected. I thus escaped influence of any kind from the perusal. A few days ago, however, I was at Philadelphia, and there I got his very strange work. I had one or two long and interesting conversations with Lee (the publisher), who knew him well, and, from one or two anecdotes he gave me, it appears that the "agreeable captain" was under writing orders as surely as he ever was, or hopes to be again, under sailing orders. He would have done quite enough service to the cause he intends to support if

he had painted things exactly as they are, without seeking to give his own eternal orange-tawny color to every object. His blunders are such as clearly to prove he never, or very rarely, listened to the answers he received—for we must not suppose that he knew one thing and printed another. Do not suppose, however, that I am coming home fraught with the Quixotic intention of running a tilt with Captain Hall. My little book will not be of him, but of all I have seen, and of much that he did not.

I long ago determined that my American letters should not ruin my European friends; it is therefore that I have not written before, but, now I am within reach of the minister's bag, I may venture to recall myself to the memory of my distant friends. Do ask that very dear, very capricious little pet of ours, Marianne Skerritt, why she has given up writing to me. I have had, during the early part of my residence here, one or two of her delightful, glowing, affectionate letters—but for more than a year I have not had a line. *Trollope senior* is a most kind and constant correspondent, but *Trollope junior* (your admirer) is a most idle personage, and rarely does more than give me a scrap in one of his father's sheets of foolscap. Miss Gabell has been a faithful recorder of all that was literary, and Lady Dyer of all that was droll among [*torn*], these have been my constant and unfailing correspondents. I have had one or two very agreeable letters from Mrs. Milton, and you may tell her I should like to have another; your one delightful letter was a *legion*. I will not attempt to tell you how I rejoiced in the splendor of your success. Since then, I doubt not, other successes have followed, and so it will be as long as you wield a pen.

Henry's miserable health, my own narrow escape from death, the failure of our hopes of placing him advantageously, and my peculiar disappointment in not benefiting him, as I had hoped to do, by this expedition, all tended (together with backwoods' disagreeabilities) to make me dislike Western America; but there is much to like and admire on this side the Alleghany Mountains, many very estimable and well-informed people, and an almost endless variety of

objects and of circumstances in the highest degree interesting; yet would I not pass the remnant of my days here, even if I could have all my family around me. America is a glorious country for Americans, but a very so-so one for Europeans.

I shall long to show you my dear girls. I think the expedition has done them good in many ways, if it has produced no other advantage. They are very dear creatures, I assure you. Adieu, dear friend; remember me kindly to your father, and do not forget that if you could find half an hour to scribble a few lines to me, *Washington City*, you would give me great, very great pleasure.

Ever affectionately yours, F. TROLLOPE.

P.S.—I am staying, and have been for the last three months, with the oldest friend I have in the world, Mrs. Stow, the eldest sister of the Julia Gunnell you have heard of. She has a charming family.

MISS STRICKLAND *to* MISS MITFORD.

Reydon Hall, August 12, 1830.

It was with regret, my dear Miss Mitford, that I quitted London without seeing you. It was not so much on account of the literary fame you have so justly earned that I was anxious for a personal interview, but for the sake of those kindly and benevolent feelings towards all of woman born which are so naturally and touchingly scattered through those pages we admire and read with such pleasure. All probability of a personal acquaintance, I fear, is at an end, as it is very likely I shall bid adieu to my native land in the course of a few months forever. I am yet selfish enough to be unwilling to resign the privilege of addressing you, and I am perhaps too proud of the kindness you have shown to me. I have at length seen and been domesticated with my dear adopted father, Mr. Pringle, who more than realized my most sanguine expectations by his worth and genius. To me he has ever shown himself a kind and disinterested friend, and I think the faculty of memory must be extinguished in my breast when I cease to recall with gratitude

the obligations he has conferred upon me. I came to town in very poor health for change of air, and joined Mr. and Mrs. P. at Hampstead. The few weeks I spent in this delightful village restored me to my former strength, and I greatly enjoyed our long morning and evening rambles upon the heath. We wanted Miss Mitford's pen to describe the picturesque groups of Irish haymakers bivouacking upon the heath. Every little declivity had its human tenants, and presented a scene of mirth or misery, of pastoral simplicity, or extreme distress and wretchedness; some of these poor people were laughing care in the face, while their haggard and wasted features told of sorrows which belied their affected gayety. Poor Ireland! How my heart aches when I think of her degraded state, of the sufferings of her rash but warm-hearted children!

My stay in London was greatly saddened by the loss of a very dear young friend. . . . I saw but few of the literary lions. Most of them had retreated into the country to enjoy air and liberty. Mrs. Lee (the Mrs. Bowdich of the annuals) was the most charming specimen of the female *literati* to whom I had the honor to be introduced. She is so perfectly the lady that we forget that she is a blue-stocking. Will you excuse the liberty I am taking, dear Miss Mitford, in enclosing the prospectus of a small volume of poems which a friend of mine has undertaken to publish for me by private subscription? I should feel greatly obliged to you if you would circulate them among any of your wealthy friends who are *unfashionable* enough to be lovers of poetry. The high opinion which my friend has of their merit makes him anxious to bring them before the public. But the method he has taken to give them publicity is most repugnant to my feelings. With every kind wish for your health and happiness, believe me, my dear Miss Mitford,

Yours most sincerely, SUSANNA STRICKLAND.

CHAPTER IX.

LETTERS FROM THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, MRS. TROLLOPE, AND MISS SEDGWICK.

MISS MITFORD was unable to obtain a license for the performance of "Charles I.," and the refusal, repeated by the Duke of Devonshire, appeared the more unfair as John Kemble had already taken the principal part in a play on the same subject and with the same name. All political allusions were carefully avoided by Miss Mitford, and both Charles and Cromwell were represented as greater than they were. But owing to this adverse decision the play was only performed on the other side of the Thames.

DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE *to* MISS MITFORD.

London, March 25, 1831.

MADAM,—The very sincere admiration and respect I feel for your talents, and the pleasure I have derived from your works, make me feel much regret in not answering your letter as you would wish. But I have made a rule not to reverse the decisions of my predecessor, the Duke of Montrose, with regard to any play which he prohibited.

Mr. Coleman is now, I trust, so much disposed to enter into my views on the subject of the drama that I should be sorry to compel him to the alternative of retracting or of losing his situation, which my making any departure from the rule I have mentioned would have the effect of doing.

I hope that you will not be subjected to any inconvenience by my decision, or think me unreasonable in making the following request, which is that you will allow me to retain the copy of your play, to add it to my dramatic library. That collection consists of nearly six thousand plays, some of which are of the greatest rarity, and if ever you should wish to refer to any of the early dramatic authors, it would

give me the greatest pleasure to show you the works of any of them. I have the honor to be, madam,

Your sincere humble servant, DEVONSHIRE.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, May 29, 1831.

I write to you, my dear friend, almost on the eve of departure, and would rather have done so on the eve of my arrival in my own dear land, were it not that I wish to propitiate your assistance in the business that must occupy me immediately on my arrival. I ask for it frankly, and frankly must you refuse should granting it include any inconvenience which my ignorance prevents my foreseeing—of this yourself only can be the judge. You know, I believe, that I have looked and listened since I have been here with a view to publication, and you know also, dear friend—for how can you help it?—that I am as utterly unknown in the world of letters as your dog May was before you immortalized him. What I would ask is such a letter of introduction to your publisher as would enable me to present myself before him without feeling as if I had dropped upon him from the moon.

My book is gossiping, and without pretension most faithfully true to the evidence of my senses, and written without a shadow of (previous) feeling for or against the things described. I have about thirty outline sketches by Hervieu,* not of scenery, but of manners, which I think will help the book greatly. I am well aware that it is difficult to bring a first effort to the light, but I think your powerful name will help me much.

I am delighted with New York—it is the only place where I have found the society really good for anything; the locality is unequalled in beauty and convenience as a mercantile city. It is here, and here only, that I have had an opportunity of seeing "Rienzi;" it is a noble tragedy, and not even the bad acting of the Chatham Theatre could spoil it. I never witnessed such a triumph of powerful poetry over weak acting as in the magnificent scene where Rienzi

* An account of him has been given on page 122.

refuses pardon to an Orsini; the narrative of the mother and her babes drew tears from American eyes, albeit unused (God knows) to any mood of deep feeling.

A letter from M. A. Skerritt followed me yesterday into the state of New Jersey, where we have been passing a few days with a friend. She speaks of "Inez" as *about to be produced.* I have been long expecting to hear that it was out. Do you remember reading it to me (excepting the fourth act, which was not then born) just before I left England? Marianne says something very unintelligible about Miss Fanny Kemble not liking her part. I fear this *young* and highly supported actress must have too entire possession of the first parts to leave any opening for an admirable woman, who has one or two theatres in the west, but who sometimes talks as if she would leave them all for the glory of appearing in "Claudia" on the London boards. She is a charming actress, but she writes me word that she is quite sure she never played anything so well as the last scenes of "Rienzi."

We are just about to start for Niagara, and shall leave New York for London immediately on our return thence.

With best remembrances to your father, believe me,

Ever affectionately yours, F. TROLLOPE.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Harrow, Sept. 16, 1831.

Have you not thought me the most ungrateful of women, my dear kind friend, for being thus long before I thanked you for your compliance with my request, and still more for the very kind manner of it? I have, however, not been ungrateful, but, as I can get no frank at Harrow, I would not write till my letter might contain the result of your kind service, as well as my thanks for it.

You will not be surprised to hear that Mr. Whittaker received graciously a communication from *you.* He was very civil, and desired me to leave the MS., saying he would get a literary friend to read it, and that in a fortnight he should be ready to give me an answer. Tom called on him after this time had expired, and was told that the MS. was with

Captain Basil Hall, who had not yet returned it. I was rather alarmed at this, as he was almost *too* good a judge of the subject. A few days afterwards, however, I received a very flattering letter from him, accompanied by several pages of remarks, all very much calculated to give me confidence in my new enterprise. This was very kind, as I am quite a stranger to him. He says that "he has strongly advised Mr. Whittaker to lose no time in publishing the work, which he is sure will interest the public greatly." Whether he said more than this to Whittaker, I know not; to me he said considerably more. However, Whittaker only told me that "Captain Hall spoke rather favorably of the work, and that he was willing to print it, dividing the profits with me."

I suppose, however, that this is as favorable an offer as a person so utterly unknown can expect. *But*, as we have been losing money on both sides of the Atlantic, a little money *in esse* would have been more agreeable than the hopes he gives *in posse*.

Miss Milman tells me that this Miss Fanny has actually written and published *a very fine tragedy*. To me this appears like a joke—a girl of nineteen write a fine tragedy! Do you believe this possible? I do not.

I was told at New York that this young lady was expected there with her father. If this be true, it does not look as if she were very successful here, as she will be the first actress of any distinction who has condescended to cross the Atlantic.

How delightfully English everything looks! I cannot describe to you the pleasure of returning to Europe after an absence of nearly four years.

I know your good father (to whom present my kind remembrances) is a bit of a radical—so I was too, once, but the United States offer a *radical* cure for this. Adieu.

Ever affectionately and gratefully yours,

F. Trollope.

Mrs. Trollope *to* Miss Mitford.

Will you, my dear and kind friend, accept my little volumes, though their politics may not quite agree with yours?

They owe their birth to you, so be tender and pitiful to them. Had you been four years among the people I have described, I do sincerely believe you would not have described them as more amiable. I write in great haste. Would you had time to tell me something of yourself and your concerns. I hear of an opera. What does it mean?

Ever gratefully and affectionately yours,

F. TROLLOPE.

MISS ROBERTS *to* MISS MITFORD.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—May I be permitted to address thus familiarly a lady with whom, though not personally acquainted, I have long been upon terms of intimacy, and for whom I have felt the most lively sentiments of regard and esteem. Ever since I had the pleasure of being a *fellow-contributor of yours in the Ladies' Magazine*,* I have most anxiously wished for an introduction to you, but was deterred from seeking an opportunity of making myself known by the consciousness of my own obscurity, and the impossibility of founding any claim upon those literary compositions which were always at so immeasurable a distance from yours. When, however, I became an inhabitant of the house in Hans Place, which I knew to be the scene of your juvenile days, from the description given in the "Boarding-school Recollections," and began to entertain a hope that my intimacy with Miss Landon and the acquaintance of Miss Skerritt would sanction my long-cherished wish, I ventured to add my invitation to that of L. E. L., that you would give us the great pleasure of your company at our ball, and the very kind and flattering message addressed to me in your reply has emboldened me to trouble Miss Skerritt with a note, which would have been written long ago, had I not feared you might think me intrusive.

* "Our Village" first appeared in this little-known periodical, which also contained many exquisite sketches of country life and scenery by M. R. M. The editor of the magazine finally absconded £40 in Miss Mitford's debt. "The only comfort is that the magazine cannot go on without me." Her contributions had increased the sale from 250 to 2000.

It is impossible for me to say how very much delighted I should be if I could hope for the opportunity of cultivating your acquaintance. If you would condescend to employ your pen upon the reminiscences of others, it would be in my power to offer you subjects so admirably adapted to your exquisite talents that I, despairing of doing anything like justice to them, have suffered them to remain dormant in my mind, content with fancying the pleasure I should derive from the delineation by so masterly a hand as yours. My friends are envying the privilege I enjoy in writing to you, and the occupation is so fascinating that, had I not taken the precaution of choosing a half-sheet of paper, I fear I should inflict more of my tediousness upon you than you could by any possibility pardon. In the hope that you will not think me too encroaching by this tax upon your patience, I remain, with the sincerest regard,

Yours, EMMA ROBERTS.

Miss Emma Roberts, during her travels in India, wrote "Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan," and "Oriental Scenes and Sketches." The latter, a poetical work, she dedicated to her friend, Miss Landon, of whom she published a biography, saying that the year spent under the same roof with her was one of the happiest in her life. The above letter seems to have been written during this period, and when she and Miss Mitford were contributing to the *Amulet.* Mr. S. C. Hall, who edited this periodical, and is, perhaps, the best authority living on such subjects, tells me that about this time Miss E. Roberts and L. E. L. were staying at No. 22 Hans Place, at a finishing establishment kept by a Mrs. Lance. In the St. Quintins' time L. E. L. had been at school in this house, and it stood but three doors below that in which L. E. L. was born. Miss Roberts returned to India, where, owing to severe literary labor for periodicals, and the heat of the climate, she died in 1840, in the forty-seventh year of her age.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Harrow, April 23, 1832.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Whittaker told me the other day that he had *agreed* for your fifth volume—trust me, I long for it. Whittaker must have made a great thing of you, dear friend. He told me some time ago that your name would sell anything. I think he is a *little* inclined to make the most of one. Had it not been for the friendly exertions of Captain Hall, I should hardly get on so well as I have done. £250 is what he has paid me for the first edition, and I am to have £200 more next week, when the second will be out. The first was one thousand two hundred and fifty, the second one thousand copies. This must pay him well, but I suppose it is all right.

How *very* wise you have been to keep yourself above the fulsome nonsense which I find it is the fashion to shower upon people "what makes books." I cannot express to you how heartily I dislike it. I hope and trust that you never mistook my earnest wish to be acquainted with you for a wish to *lionize*. I liked and I loved you, and it is very possible I may have told you so, but indeed and indeed it was not because you were *the* Miss Mitford. How much I admire you for keeping out of London!

I never felt less in good-humor with people in my life than I have done since I have been so be-puffed and be-praised. I am, however, thankful for the *money* I have gained by it; it has been very useful to us. My dear Henry (whom you do not know, but whom I hope you some day will) is to be immediately entered at the Temple by means of it—so *vive la plume!*

What does one do to get business with the mags and annuals? Does one say, as at playing écarté, "I propose," or must one wait to be asked? Remember, dear, that I have five children.

I was not lucky enough to see Miss Sedgwick, but I will transcribe for you a passage from the journal of a lady, which has just been lent me. I *may* not name her name as I quote her. "Miss Sedgwick's novel of 'Hope Leslie'

had prepared us to think well of its author, nor were we disappointed in spite of the extraordinary portion of drawl she has to contend with. Her countenance is pleasing, and her conversation so infinitely superior to that of the ladies we generally have met in America that it was quite refreshing. The Sedgwick family is that of the greatest importance in Stockbridge, and both the males and females are more cultivated than most families."

Ever affectionately yours, F. TROLLOPE.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, May 14, 1832.

Your letters, my dear Miss Mitford, are destined to be to me what an exquisite dessert is to a man whose keen and wholesome appetite would fain have been regaled with the first course—the dessert is delicious, but it only appeases the cravings of hunger without satisfying them. "Mr. Jones" is my Petruchio. His very name has a *knell* in it, and if your kind heart should prompt you again to write to me, I entreat you to eschew my countryman Mr. Jones. I am not surprised (revolted I think I could not be at anything from you) at your *feudal* tastes. Old institutions and usages, under which you have been educated, and which have formed your mind, naturally inspire respect and affection. They are endeared by habit, embellished by romance and poetry, and consecrated by history; they must be inwrought with your thoughts and affections, and cannot be touched without jarring the whole fabric. There is, no doubt, a dignified tranquillity in living as you of the aristocracy do, within barriers that cannot be passed "without permission." We, on the contrary, are on the world's wide common, where every one is entitled (to borrow the words Dr. Franklin put into the mouth of St. Peter in addressing a heterodox saint) to take the best place he can find. This occasions much loss of the picturesque, and some jostlings and hard rubs, no doubt; but the lines of demarcation here, though imperceptible to a stranger's eye, are understood and felt among us. I doubt if the born and bred gentry of England could *relish* the state of things here; and yet believe me, my dear Miss

Mitford, there is much to delight a spirit so benevolently interested as yours in the happiness of humanity. The million have now their just weight in the scale, and for their sakes you would renounce old prejudices.—Forgive me! This discourteous *Americanism* dropped from my pen unwittingly. We are such a new modelling and remodelling people that we are apt to condemn all "forms and *pressures* past" as prejudices; with us everything is in a state of fusion to be cast in the best (and sometimes for best read *newest*) mould. I was reading your letter to one of my nieces—a girl of eleven. I said, I suspect our dear Miss Mitford is an anti-reformist. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "I wish that everybody we *love* in England would not be against the reform!" "Who do you mean by everybody, Jane?" "Why, Sir Walter Scott and Miss Mitford."

The mention of the little girl reminds me that I have yet a great deal more to say than you would have patience to read, and the limits of my paper whisper brevity. My condition is strikingly unlike yours in one respect. I have brothers who, I think (and as we think of our friends so they are to us), have no superiors; one beloved sister, and four sisters as true and devoted as if they were born flesh of my flesh, though "in law" has to be written after the title by which I am allied to them. Besides, I have a little community of nephews and nieces, including my adopted child —the little girl who is honored by your regard. Am I boasting of this wealth? God forbid! A friend of mine once said to me, "You touch the world at too many points." Events that have made heaven nearer and dearer to me have taught me that the keenest suffering is the price to be paid for the greatest blessings. My brother Robert, with whom I live in New York, is your devoted admirer. I wish I could describe to you the unaffected enthusiasm with which he kissed your signature. I have this moment open before me a letter just received from one of my sisters, Mrs. Theodore Sedgwick. I am tempted to make an extract from it. "I was delighted with Miss M.'s letter; its frankness, cordiality, and spirit show how much of her character is infused into her village sketches, and make them doubly

valuable. I beg you will let her know the admiration your sister entertains for her. I am entitled to this introduction, as, without my urging you, you would never have written her."

My heart urged too, my dear Miss Mitford, but I shrank from obtruding.

I write by Mr. Ashburner, who is going out for his daughter, to return the 1st of August. He will bring a letter to me addressed to the care of Miss Sharp, 14 New Ormond St., London. Shall he not bear the precious freight? Tell me anything of yourself — anything of your noble father (long may he live!), whom I have loved ever since you took that ride with him in a one-horse chaise of a misty morning. Do you remember?

My Kate begs her grateful and affectionate remembrances may be sent to you. She would not be satisfied without writing, but she is just now sick in bed—a rare occurrence for her. She has been with me in the city all winter, and her progress has satisfied my most ardent desires for her. May I send my affectionate regards to your father?

Believe me yours, truly and affectionately,

C. M. SEDGWICK.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Julian Hill, Nov. 13, 1832.

I would not write, my dear friend, to thank you for your letter till I could thank you for your book too. Now, I am happy to say, I can do both. But I was put in a fright for fear I should miss the letter, for when my son called at *our man's* to ask for it, Mr. Howe told him that all the gift copies were already sent. I was in a bit of a rage, because Whittaker knew that you intended one for me long ago. However, I took wisdom in my wrath, and determined to be refused by the master as well as by the man before I cried out. The instant I mentioned the circumstance to Whittaker, he said, "Most certainly there is a copy ready for you;" so all is well, and I thank you much, and will thank you more still when you come to see me (as you have so often promised to do), and will write my name in it. It

has made me extravagant, for I have ordered the four other volumes. The work is perfectly *unique*. I know nothing like it in any language, and it is among the few to which one can turn again and again with even new pleasure. The "Farewell" is one of the sweetest bits of writing that I know. I should have paid you (not in *kind*, God knows! but) in *produce*, by sending my three big volumes.—By the way, I think you rather extravagant for giving such extra good measure; why, there is matter enough in your volume to make two of the novel genus. But the reason I have not sent them is that Whittaker, to my great satisfaction, told me that he expected there must be another edition directly, and that he should be glad if I would delay sending *my six copies* till then. So I shall wait upon you then, if you will condescend to be at home to it.

When shall you come to town? Mrs. Bentley writes me word that Covent Garden is *beautiful*. She tells me of some American actor who has come over to perform here, whose name, however, I cannot read in her MS., that says, "Every word in Mrs. Trollope's book is true without the slightest exaggeration."

The Kembles, she tells me, are doing wonders—poor Charles will be rich at last. I hear Macready is quite out of fashion—he had better have played "Rienzi," dear. It is long since he has made a hit—his benefit brought nothing.

You can form no idea of the pleasure your Bramshill scene gave me. That part was the favorite, and in summer often the daily haunt of my youthful days. There was one particular spot under a high oak, where I have sat alone for hours. It was within hearing of the great clock, and but for that I should often have been benighted there. I wish I knew Sir John Cope. I would give a joint of my little finger to visit Bramshill again. Adieu.

Ever affectionately yours, F. TROLLOPE.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, Dec. 12, 1832.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Do not discard me as an over-punctual correspondent. I am writing thus promptly after

the receipt of your kind letter, in the hope of procuring for my nephew, Mr. George Pomeroy, the happiness of an introduction to you. He is now in England on the business of a large commercial house of this city, of which he is a partner. He is in some sort entitled to the pleasure of seeing you, being among your most enthusiastic admirers, and may I not hope that he has some claim, or, more modestly speaking, chance, as my friend as well as kinsman, of your acquaintance? Lord Bacon commends the Italians for making little difference between their children and nephews. I certainly have found the sweetest fountains of my affections and happiness opened by the children of my brothers and sisters.

That was a fortunate clause in Mrs. Trollope's book in which she speaks of her "friend, Miss Mitford"—to borrow a cant phrase of our business city, it was a "heavy name," a "Baring" or a "Rothschild" on doubtful paper. Mrs. Trollope must have been very unfortunate in her associations in this country. There is undoubtedly a very crude state of society in the new towns of our Western States; and in every part of our country, in our best circles, there are persons to be met who have not been able to throw off the coarse habits as they rose above the fortunes of their early years. But Mrs. Trollope, though she has told some disagreeable truths, has for the most part caricatured till the resemblance is lost. Wherever she has attempted a characteristic conversation she has given a slang unknown even among our domestics, and mingled with a dialect that is anything but American. It is difficult, almost impossible, for a foreigner to comprehend this country, and I am not surprised that those accustomed to the thorny and almost impassable barriers of England should be shocked at finding themselves in an open field, where they seem to be turned in with all sorts of cattle. But the case is not quite so bad. Distinctions are felt, though not seen, and there is as little real danger to any personal rights or individual dignity as there was (do not think me presuming in the comparison) to Adam and Eve moving in Paradise amidst its races subjected by the inviolable laws of Providence.

In your own kind language, my dear Miss Mitford, I am certain *you* would like America, but I am aware that in order to your liking it your very superior heart as well as mind must operate. No benevolent being can help liking a country where happiness is so attainable and so diffused, and where there is so rapid a progress in all the arts, comforts, and enjoyments of life. And as to *my liking England*, I love and honor it now, as a dutiful child loves and honors a parent. Sir Walter Scott's death has been mourned through our land, as we mourn for our personal benefactors. We had a little family *fête* in honor of him at my eldest brother's in Berkshire a few evenings since. We were all required to produce some tribute to his memory.

The seeds were a most delightful little gift. We had the flower in one of the gardens of our valley for the first time last summer—but this is from *your* garden, and there is nothing about which that wonderful electric chain is so wound as a plant from the garden of a friend.

Do I love flowers! Better than anything but friends, who can speak or *write* to me. If ever I have an opportunity I will send you some of our indigenous plants. Have you the orchis? any of our azaleas, or kalmias? Is our fringed gentian,

> "Whose sweet and quiet eye
> Looks thro' its fringes to the sky,"

a stranger to you?

Fanny Kemble is here, witching the young, and making even old eyes weep. She is much courted and admired in society—at least, among the ultra-fashionable. The sages say she is an actress, and therefore disqualified for society.

I am truly obliged to you for saving me from the mortification of inflicting postage on you. I made an unsuccessful effort to avoid it when I last wrote to you. When you write again, do tell me more of yourself. When do you appear again in public? So great a favorite ought not to be so long behind the scenes—these busy scenes that somebody will tread. What is the state of your father's health? God bless him and you, my dear Miss Mitford!

Yours truly and affectionately, C. M. Sedgwick.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Julian Hill, Dec. 27, 1832.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Not knowing where to get a frank, I have delayed answering your letter till I could get a copy of the book I wished to send you from Whittaker. Not that I have suffered the interval to pass in idleness. I have (without using names) been obtaining all the information within reach on the subject of your last letter. For myself, I can truly say that there is no literary enterprise I should set about with so true a relish as that of reviewing "Our Village," and I think I could write an interesting article on it. But I am assured from the best authority that *no woman* has ever written for the *Quarterly*.

Respecting Captain H——, I was assured by the most intimate friend he has, to whom I applied (not now, but respecting the domestic manners of the American) that the surest way to prevent his writing any review at all would be to mention the subject to him, and many anecdotes were told me to prove the truth of the statement. This being the case, I fear that not all my good-will can avail. Could *you*, by your literary connection, obtain insertion for such an article in any review or magazine? I would joyfully write it *gratis*, and to the very top of my power. It has occurred to me that Mr. Harness is an intimate friend of yours; he, I know, writes for the *Quarterly*, for he reviewed Fanny Kemble's play. Could not he be made useful? I cannot tell you how heartily I wish I could be so, and how mortifying is the consciousness of my want of power.

How I wish you would set about a novel! It is *impossible* that it should not be a brilliant success. Your manner of writing, your knowledge of character, your pathos, and your rich vein of quiet humor, to say nothing of your previous reputation, must infallibly insure it. I do not believe that there is one left who could compete with you in this walk.

Is your member in? I hope so. The elections have passed off very quietly, which has certainly been a great comfort; but some of them have been very queer—Gully, for instance—a prize-fighter making laws! It is new.

I will not give up the hope of seeing you here this spring. You *must* have business in London, I am quite sure. Adieu, dear friend. Tell me that you believe in my zeal, though you perceive my impotence, and accept the very affectionate best wishes of

Yours most truly,

F. TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER X.

LETTERS FROM MISS SEDGWICK AND MRS. HOWITT.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, May 17, 1833.

I THANK you most heartily, my dear Miss Mitford, for your last kind letter, which seemed to me more charming than any of its forerunners; but, on investigation, I believe its superiority consisted in its being a little longer. Gold is always gold, but a little more of it is always acceptable. I grieve to know that you are feeling the leaden weight of mortality; there are, no doubt, uses in every mode of affliction, but that particular form of it which makes the body press upon the mind, which substitutes weariness and imbecility and nothingness for the joy of exercise and the fine fruits of exertion—in short, that horrid state of things called ill-health, which subjugates the mind to its mere vehicle and instrument, is to me one of the most puzzling articles in our probation. Do you not think that some such change as crossing the Atlantic would renovate you? You suggest it yourself, and therefore I am emboldened to urge it; you cannot leave your father, nor would I ask you, for I feel a sort of filial interest in whatever touches him. But is it impossible that he should accompany you? Last year an English gentleman of seventy-five came to this country in May, visited Niagara, more than four hundred miles from this city, and recrossed the ocean in September. The facilities for travelling here (notwithstanding the horrors recorded against us) are very great. We have steamboats and canal navigation to Niagara. A friend of ours took tea with us last Friday evening, who left Richmond, Virginia, a distance of nearly five hundred miles, on Tuesday morning, and accomplished the journey without excessive fatigue.

Now I would not certainly travel at this rate, but where such travelling is possible a passage through the country cannot be very formidable, even to a person of advanced years. Apart from all the delight I should expect from seeing you, I am sure you would find much to like and to enjoy here, and for once our country would be painted by an accomplished artist, who at least was willing to give it its best expression. I am rejoiced to hear that your father is friendly to us, for though I think it absurd to be sensitive about the opinion of foreigners, yet the kind dispositions of those I think of as friends is highly gratifying. It must be confessed that we are nationally ridiculously sensitive on this matter of opinion. It is a kind of new-small-townish feeling, an anxiety to be known, and a determination to be admired when known.

There is undoubtedly a crude state of things among us. Mrs. Trollope (by the way, I am exceedingly obliged to you for your very fine account of her, which has very much raised her in our good opinion) has not much misstated, though she has grossly caricatured, us. You may imagine in a country where everybody travels, and where there are no acknowledged distinction of classes, no barriers obvious to the senses, that in such places as steamboats, canal-boats, and stage-coaches the respect with which any individual is treated must greatly depend upon circumstances. It is not very easy for a person educated in a different condition of society to adapt themselves to the peculiarities of a new aspect of society; but from my own experience I am sure your father is right in saying that a lady may travel from Georgia to Maine without meeting any impertinence. Try it, only try it, my dear friend, and if I am not right I will turn traitor.

Bryant, who is living in a cottage at Hoboken, a place separated from the most dense part of the city only by the waters of the Hudson, and peaceful and beautiful as Paradise, a fit residence for a poet, has just brought me a bouquet of wild-flowers, tied with a knot of Seneca grass. Would that I could send it to you! Its fragrant breath would speak for me more expressively than my pen can.

A neighbor of ours, who is not rich enough to keep a

coach, but has sense enough to keep a sociable and enjoy it daily, took me a few days since a little drive into the country, and, avoiding the thronged, broad avenues, selected an obscure road that, but for occasional glimpses of the Hudson, whitened with the tokens of commerce, sails and steamboats, would have cheated us into the feeling that we were a thousand miles from the city. We came to a sudden turn that led into a deeply shaded, nooked lane. "Ah, turn here, Sydney," said my companion, "into Miss Mitford's lane, as you call it." This, as you may suppose, made my heart beat quicker. Is it not something to have given a name and a heightened charm to nature three thousand miles away? The mother and the son proceeded to tell me of their exquisite pleasure from your works, of *the boy's* familiar acquaintance with May and Dash, etc.

I was reading your inimitable description of Dora Creswell the other day to a friend of mine who was confined to his bed by illness. He laughed and cried by turns, and averred there could not be a word changed for the better, except that of reaper applied to Dora. Being a practical farmer, and not very familiar with the license that would allow you to call her a reaper though she did not actually cut down the grain, he was, as we say, *exercised* about that word. My good friend is a philanthropist, too, and would hardly let me off without promising to interest you in the cause of the Peace Society. I had to tell him that all our sex were born members of it. There is here, as I presume there is in England, great activity in all the modifications of the cause of humanity. New York would remind you of the Oriental faces on the "Anniversary week," as the week is called when the benevolent societies from all parts of this great continent meet in this city. Alas! Kate asks for a scrap of paper, and I am too much in the habit of saying yes to her. I have not, nor can I, my dear Miss Mitford, express the pleasure your letters give me. I am truly concerned that you have had any disappointments, and could pray for protection from every evil for you, but I have much faith in clouds, and must not ask for all sunshine, even for you.

My very best regards to your father. Tell him sixty and

upwards in England is not more than fifty here. Oh that I had space to write all I would deduce from this! I have another nephew who is travelling in Europe, and will present himself to you within a year. We think him a clever and accomplished young man. I hope, if he has the happiness to see you, he will not appear to you a North American savage.

Will my dear Miss Mitford allow me once more, after so long a time, the pleasure of telling her how much pleasure I have had in poring over her letters, and re-reading "Our Village," and how much delighted and how grateful I am of her kind remembrance of me. I am enchanted at having before me the prospect of meeting more of the inhabitants of "Our Village." Is it not natural that, with such fresh, vivid, and agreeable recollections of Sally, of Lucy, of Harriet and Joel, of the Loddon, of the copse and the straw, I should wish to see the children of the swing breathing creatures, and the perpetual beauty of the river, the fields, and woods. Alas! I have only room left to tell you with what true and hearty affection I am yours. I cannot but smile that the construction of my sentence imputes *advanced years* to you, my dear Miss Mitford, and I find, as I before conjectured by your last letter, that, as to distance, we are equal travellers in this "vale of tears." I am sure that you have made a portion of it to me a vale of smiles; but does not this bond draw us closer? God bless you!

Yours, E. M. SEDGWICK.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, April 6, 1834.

I hoped, my dearest Miss Mitford, to have heard again from you or of you before I wrote. We have heard newspaper reports of your being very ill. This is a cruel way of hearing from one in whose welfare and happiness I take a real and deep interest, and whose departure from this world, even though we must always dwell three thousand miles apart, would materially circumscribe the sphere of my enjoyments. Should this letter find you recovered, as I trust in heaven it will do, write to me immediately, and tell me in good, *womanly phrase* your *complaints*, and whether you have

not reason for expecting better health for the future. Write as you would write to one who cares for all your maladies great and small. Your life is such a public blessing, and such a necessity, as it seems to me, to that dear father (of whom you have so often made such affectionate mention that I feel as if he were very near of kin to me), that I tremble when I think by how frail a tenure you may hold it. Thank you for introducing your friend or your friend's husband to us; we have found him a most amusing and original person, and he has laid me under everlasting obligations to him by presenting me with a charming bust of you, looking just so intellectual, sweet-tempered, and kind-hearted as does the dear Miss Mitford of my imagination. The little figure is regularly presented to all our friends and visitors, and the sagacious and *likeness*-seeing among them pronounce it a striking resemblance. Mr. W. has, I believe, decided not to transfer his residence to America. I think he is right; it is wisest to let the young bees swarm for themselves, the old ones remain in the old hives. America is not the place for an eminent artist. We are a nation of *workers*, and have not leisure or fortune for an extended cultivation and patronage of the fine arts. We have no society or association for artists. Irving said to me this winter in relation to Leslie's experiment of a residence here, "We have plucked a star from the firmament." Poor Leslie! after passing the winter in complete seclusion amidst the snows of our highlands, he has decided to return to England. It is said the government institution by which he was employed has not kept faith with him; his brother-in-law told me Leslie had lived too long in England, and that his English wife had come resolved to be dissatisfied. She is said to be a weak woman, full of prejudice and inflexible in her English habits. I do not blame her; it demands rare sense and temper to get the better of all the prejudice of education, to divest ourselves of habit and association. We are accustomed to the inconveniences that result from our condition, and we can remove or submit to them. An Englishwoman finds an American servant intolerable; we know and humor their peculiarities, and thus get on comfortably

with them. Our own artists who have not been long enough abroad to acquire new tastes and habits are happy and successful among us. Grant we have some who would, I believe, be distinguished anywhere. Allston's name must be known to you, and Cole paints nature so truly and beautifully that, dearly as I love our misty mornings, dewy hills, and ever-varying sunsets in Berkshire, I think I could exist through a summer in New York if I had his landscapes to look at. I regret that we shall not see your friend Mrs. Westmacott here. Her husband half promised he would bring the old lady, as he calls her, across the water. I hope she will not quarrel with me for being the fortunate subject of Mr. W.'s bounty; she must forgive me while she has the advantage of seeing the original.

I had a great deal to say to you, but I have been prosing on here confused by half a dozen of my petted nephews and nieces, who would not be driven out of my room. I dare not begin upon another sheet, as Mr. W. tells me that Mr. Palmer is no longer M.P., and I am too sure my letter would not pay its own way. Have you any other *franking* friends? And will you not come to us? I know that such spirits as yours and your father's would find much to love and commend, and you should love merry England best, and I *think it best* too if you would.

Kate says I promised her a space. How kind of you always to remember her!

Truly and affectionately yours, E. M. Sedgwick.

P.S.—Aunt Kitty never knows when to stop when she writes to you, dear Miss Mitford, and she has cut me off with this mite of a corner to tell you how much I love and admire you, and how I wish to see you, and with what pleasure I look upon the little bust which Mr. Westmacott has given my aunt, discovering that nothing would so effectually establish him in her good graces as this image of one so dear to her. Thank you again and again for your kind remembrance of me. I am so proud of a place in Miss Mitford's affections. Believe me to be,

Ever yours affectionately, Kate Sedgwick.

PP.S.—I see a great deal of Fanny Kemble when she is in the city. I admire and love her. She is to be in New York in a few days to bid us professionally farewell, and is soon after to be married. Butler is a gentlemanly man, with good sense and amiable disposition, infinitely her inferior. Poor girl, she makes a dangerous experiment; I have a thousand fears of the result. My affectionate respect to your father. Your letter written in July remained with Mrs. Griffith's album in the Custom-house, and did not get into my hands till March.

The publication of "Our Village," and Miss Mitford's success in the drama, led to her becoming acquainted with Mrs. Howitt, who sent her in 1834 a copy of her "Seven Temptations."*

MARY HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Nottingham, Feb. 27.

DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I rejoice in finding an occasion to address you, that I may express the very great pleasure both my husband and myself have always derived from your writing. We know your "village," and all its crofts, and lanes, and people, and we wish we had the happiness of personally knowing you.

May I beg your acceptance of the volume I send herewith? You are a worshipper of the drama like myself, and I hope you may find something in it to like.

My husband begs to present his kind regards to you, and hoping by some good chance or other we may shake hands before long,

I am, dear Miss Mitford, yours very truly,

MARY HOWITT.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

Stockbridge, Sept. 26, 1834.

Your introductory note by Miss Martineau, my dear Miss Mitford, was forwarded to me from New York a few days

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* A volume of dramas, in which the personification of the evil principle attempted through various trials to ruin mankind.

since. I am delighted to owe to you the right to ask this distinguished lady to visit us in Berkshire. This is a new bond between us, and though those that already exist are sufficient to bind me to you for life, and all beyond, yet I care not how much they are multiplied. I have participated in your dramatic success; it is an exalted sphere, and one worthy of you. How happy you are in having such an infusion of pure, disinterested feeling in the pleasure of your triumph!—to attach a fellow-conqueror instead of a captive to your car. Your association with your father always seems to consecrate your literary labors, to give you such a sacred pleasure in success that you must be saved from all the littlenesses of literary vanity, to satisfy the cravings of a generous nature to some object beyond self. Is it not so? Dear Miss Mitford, may this high motive and reward long be continued to you!

Miss Martineau has been received at New York with a cordiality befitting her claims; to tell the truth, our good people have been so roughly handled by some of our English friends that they are now a little shy of them, and an individual must have especial merit to counteract the general prejudice. There is a foundation of truth in all censure, even calumny, and I do not in the least doubt that members of refined European society must be often shocked at the coarseness and occasional vulgarities to be met with in the motley crowds of our steamboats, lodging-houses, and even *sometimes* in our drawing-rooms; but the philosophy of our sagacious visitors should penetrate below the surface. In a country absolutely without castes, where the childhood of those who fill our first offices was passed in the family of the mechanic or the farmer, the habits of early life *will out.* How much should I have, if we were together, to say on this and kindred subjects, all which I should finish with the humble confession that we are over-sensitive to foreign opinion, and betray thereby a want of a fixed and independent self-respect. Miss Martineau is coming this week to Stockbridge, and I would defer writing to you till after that great event, but I am induced to send this letter by my nephew, Mr. George Pomeroy, who deserves the honor he

covets of an introduction to you. He missed seeing you when he was in England before, but I trust he will now be more fortunate. Thank you, my dear friend, for your great kindness to, and flattering mention of, Theodore Sedgwick. He was charmed with his visit to you. Our girls were quite annoyed that you should have attributed his gentlemanly air to his visit to Paris. I mention this as a pretty fair specimen of our national nervousness on certain subjects. Since Theodore's return he has made his fortune by an engagement to a charming creature whose wealth is in stores of fine qualities, embodied in a beautiful form. Their mutual attachment has been growing from the time they first met in Stockbridge, when my brother removed from his residence in New York to my father's place in Stockbridge, and Sarah Ashburner came from Bombay, *via* England, to live in our village. What wonderful means are used to bring about the matches made in heaven!

You ask news of Fanny Kemble; I have not seen her since June, but I had a letter from her last week written in most delightful spirits; she is in Philadelphia, her husband's residence, and they are shortly going into their own house, where she invites me to come and see the little Englishwoman manage her republican independent dependants. She is publishing her journal, and, after scolding me for confessing that I had some "flutterings" about it, she says that every sheet, as it goes to the press, is submitted to the soberer judgment of her husband, in which, she says, "you have justly more confidence than in mine." Butler, though inferior in genius and in all that gives charm to the character, has very good common-sense, is a true American, and has an American *ear*, which is as important in this case as a musical ear to a composer. I must cut myself off and give you a little extract from her letter, it is so agreeable, so characteristic:

"The beginning of your letter was dated Niagara, and full of the inspirations of your whereabout; now I have a great mind to treat you to the very perfection of contrast, and reply in the same spirit of my 'whatabout,' viz., *book-keeping*, a whole four pages of day-books, journals, invoices,

commissions, bills of exchange, percentage, and all the jargon of a thorough double-entry desk. Now, pray exclaim aloud, as I have done internally a thousand times since I began to learn this most matter-of-fact of sciences, 'Great is the power of love.'"

So you see what she is about, a loving wife.

We expect Miss M. this week; would it were you, dear Miss Mitford. Shall I confess to you I have some dread of this wonderful lady like that I have seen in some *very* simple people for me, who, forsooth, have thought me a lion, me "an innocent beast of a good conscience." I agree with a good, simple lady of my acquaintance that "political economy is an *excellent thing;*" but, alas! when I read Miss M.'s books, I slip the political economy as a friend of mine did the *muscles* when he studied *anatomy.* But again, would it were you, and *because you are you.*

I have not yet thanked you for the nice present of the books, nor for your kind intention of sending the flowers—oh, they shall bloom in our sweetest of all valleys, and you shall some day come and see them! Will you not? I have so many dear and, I think, charming friends who already love and honor you.

I walked from my brother Charles's, Kate's father, to our valley, eleven miles, yesterday. Can you do more, my dear lady?

Mrs. Butler is under another engagement to perform another year for her father, should he require her, but, as he went off in a pet with Butler, his pride may save her that misery.

[My aunt, dear Miss Mitford, says that her letter is very particularly dull, and this melancholy circumstance is owing to poor me. Can you forgive me for such an offence? Thank you a thousand times for your kind remembrance of me: it is one of the many pleasures, and one of the greatest, for which I have to thank my dear aunt. Believe me, my dear Miss Mitford, ever very affectionately (if you will allow me to quote your own words), your own KATE.]

How I wish I could show you our own Kate—"Euphros-

yne," Fanny Butler calls her—and she is no goddess, but the very spirit of cheerfulness. My letter is already so full, but I must add my very affectionate regards to your father and my earnest prayers for you both.

Yours most truly,

E. M. SEDGWICK.

MISS HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Nottingham, Feb. 1, 1835.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD, — The most truly *English* sketches in the language are your country volumes. Well, through these volumes we have been wending this winter. We had read them before, and many of the stories were as familiar to us as household words; but they have been read this time principally that William might trace out their localities, and a great additional charm has his knowledge of your part of the country given them. But, dear Miss Mitford, you are a bold woman—nay, you are the most imprudent woman I ever knew. I always thought so, if it should turn out, as it does, that "Our Village" is Three Mile Cross. Did not your neighbors tell you so—"The man would have been better had he not drank so much," "The woman, whose fat, dirty children were the picture of vulgarity," "The man who was incorrigibly lazy and good-for-nothing," "The touchy lady," and so on. I should have expected the people to mob you, for I take it for granted that all these people live where you have placed them. Nobody can doubt for a moment but that they are all sketched from the life. We are here divided into two parties touching that same touchy lady: one party stated that she could not have passed through a courtship without ascertaining what the initial B of her husband's name stood for; the other says you are right. I do not tell you to which faction I belong.

Your letter was brought to me by a very sweet, gentle girl, Fanny Cartledge, who is staying with her friends in Nottingham. She has not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you, but looks forward to it. I think you will like her much; she will make a very pretty sketch for you, and must accompany you and poor Mayflower's suc-

cessor to the copse, or the dingle, or violeting, or on a visit to Lucy.

I wish you would come and see our great flower-show next month — no, this month, February. The vernal crocuses in our meadows—and beautiful meadows they are, too, on the banks of the Trent—but these flowers surpass belief, and I always despair of making one comprehend how beautiful they are. They are seen to many miles' distance —spaces of twenty acres or so in the green flats of the meadows, of one intense lilac-color, as clearly and vividly lilac as the grass around is green. But when you walk among them the effect is inconceivable, the petals, of transparent, tender hue, contrasting so beautifully with the yellow of the inside. The expanse is so unlike the common covering of the earth that for one moment it seems a sin to tread them down. They look almost spiritual, and you think of the flowers of heaven. Then, again, they are so lavishly spread, so thick, springing up by millions, that one longs to grasp them by handfuls, to lie down among them, as the children do. But their most beautiful attribute is the joy they diffuse over the hearts of thousands. They make the paradise of the poor. Here come the poor, pale children, who have sat seaming stockings, or running lace thirteen or fourteen hours a day for a few pence—here they come in the half-hour they can steal from their meals and gather up flowers by thousands, and no low alley shall you enter at this season but in its poorest dwelling you shall find the little cup of crocuses, brought by some little child or old man. I wish you could see them, dear Miss Mitford—what a glorious paper would you write about them!

William admonishes me to make an end, that the parcel may go to-night. I am, my dear friend,

Yours affectionately,

MARY HOWITT.

CHAPTER XI.

LETTERS FROM N. P. WILLIS, MISS MARTINEAU, AND MRS. HOWITT. —DESCRIPTION OF A COUNTRY WEDDING BY MISS MITFORD.— LETTERS FROM MRS. HOFLAND.

NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS was a most popular writer both in America and in this country. He was the originator of the *American Monthly Magazine*, and the author of "Pencillings by the Way." The following is the first letter he wrote to Miss Mitford:

MR. WILLIS *to* MISS MITFORD.

Thursday Evening.

DEAR MADAM,—I regret more than I can well express my disappointment on arriving last night at the Victoria too late to have the pleasure of seeing you. I dined out, and was not able to get away in time, and to-day I have an engagement to dine with Lady Blessington at eight, which deprives me again of one of the chief pleasures I had promised myself in coming to England. Mr. Rand (who waits kindly for this note) tells me it is possible you do not leave town to-morrow. I have taken your address, and shall call to-morrow at twelve in the hope of finding you. My literary countrymen would never forgive me for leaving England without seeing one of the most unexceptionably popular authors in the United States, and as a matter of popular feeling it would be to me a serious disappointment. I hope you will excuse the extreme hurry of this note, and believe me, dear madam,

Most respectfully and truly yours,

N. P. WILLIS.

The first letter of Miss Martineau to Miss Mitford was to thank her for one of her tragedies which she had sent, and

to hope that they would become personally acquainted. The next letter was the subjoined:

MISS MARTINEAU *to* MISS MITFORD.

17 Pludyer Street, Thursday Morning.

MY DEAR MADAM,—Mr. Hayward tells me that we are to consider ourselves already acquainted, and your kind intention of calling on me removes from me all scruple in doing so. I wish I could come to you, but my time is parcelled out so that I cannot get even as far as the Strand without breaking a previous engagement. I should be most happy to see you this afternoon, if you would not mind the risk of having to pass a few minutes with my mother while my banker and I are settling a little business. He comes at five, and at half-past six, or a little earlier, a friend calls for me to visit Mrs. Somerville at Chelsea. I am ashamed to ask you to visit me thus, but it is my only chance; and you will pardon my freedom, I trust, if you cannot give me the privilege of seeing you—a privilege I have long desired, for I owe more to you than you can possibly be aware of, though you may have discovered traces of the influence which the spirit of your writings has had over me.

Believe me, with much respect, your obliged

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

The following letter from Miss Mitford is here published, as it contains an interesting account of her meeting Miss Martineau and Mr. Willis:

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

July 23, 1834.

At last, my dearest Emily, I have returned home. My spoiling place was not the theatre, but the world. Every day we had from sixty to seventy visitors, and three times more parties made for me than I could have attended, even if I had refused all exhibiting show parties, and gone only to friends, dining with what they called quiet parties of twenty or thirty, and thirty or forty more arriving to tea. At last, however, I was forced to break off this, or I should

have returned to the country without seeing any public place whatever; and my last week or ten days were spent in seeing all to be seen in London in the morning, and attending operas and plays every evening—the artists all writing to show me their galleries, and the very best private boxes everywhere being reserved for my accommodation—no queen could have been more deferentially received. Even my maid was shown everywhere as a part of me. I have not yet recovered the fatigue; but most certainly nothing could be more gratifying. I formed many valuable friendships, renewed old acquaintances, and made many new. The woman whom I like best is Harriet Martineau, who is cheerful, frank, cordial, and right-minded in a very high degree; and my favorite amongst the men is decidedly that most accomplished and delightful person, Mr. Hayward (the translator of "Faust"), a very young man, but decidedly the leader of the best London society. I also liked much Mr. Willis, an American author, whose unwritten poetry and unwritten philosophy you may remember in my American book, and who is now understood to be here to publish his account of England. He is a very elegant young man, and more like one of the best of our peers' sons than a rough republican.

MR. W. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Nottingham, Jan. 30, 1835.

DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I herewith beg to introduce to you the ancient and venerable sage, Pantika. I do not imagine that he will very much please you, as you are so much more interested in modern and living characters than in such legends as he has to relate. But I introduce him principally for a good excuse for renewing that acquaintance I much wish to make again with you when in your pleasant country. We have been reading your volumes a second time just lately, and I now see the whereabouts of your situations, and even your characters (whereof my charioteer, Ben Therly, is not the least), far better than I did. With two things I have, however, been much struck. One is that you never mention, as a characteristic of your landscapes, those grave herds of black and white Berkshire hogs, which are

seen as steadily grazing in the fields as sheep. You, I dare say, do not see anything strange in this, but it struck me as a peculiar feature of Berkshire and Hampshire. In the Midland Counties you never see anything of the kind. The other *wonderful thing* is that, in your very graphic descriptions of your woody lanes and copses, you never, as I perceive, deign to notice that species of clematis which hangs in such rich masses on the bushes and along the upland thickets all across the south of England, and is everywhere dignified with the name of "Old Man's Beard." Have you taken a spite against this, in my opinion, very ornamental plant? If you have, I wish you would, by pure legerdemain, transfer it to our hedges, for it does not grow wild in this part of the world.

I am right thankful to see that you have got in your eloquent friend, Sergeant Talfourd, for Reading. I can imagine you very much occupied and interested during the progress of that election—ay, even canvassing mightily. For my part, I feel quite easy as to the course of political events. I have now just as much fear of the progress of reform being arrested as I have of the stream of the Thames being stopped. To attempt such a thing is to be sure of getting swept away by it, though perhaps not without some damage to the country.

Mrs. Howitt will write with this to thank you for your welcome present of your tragedy, and as welcome letter. After I left you I had a most delightful ramble of a walk. Such weather at such a season surely never was before sent out of heaven. I strolled through the New Forest, chatted with Miss Bowles in her sweet cottage near Lymington, went on through Winchester, Salisbury—traversed its great plain, and wondered at Stonehenge. Then on into the beautiful county of Devon; into Dartmoor to Plymouth, across the water to Falmouth, St. Michael's Mount, Penzance, Land's End. A glorious wild scene! Among the Cornish mines to Tintagel—the very birthplace of King Arthur—only think of that! And I have some pieces of his old castle too. I traversed Cornwall on foot, from the Land's End to its northern boundary, and saw as many

glow-worms one night as would stock all your Berkshire lanes. I also dined one day, on a certain moor, upon a *turnip-pie* fit in *size* to set on Arthur's own round table. I found also in that luxurious land fish-pies, squab-pies, sweet-giblet-pies, and pies such as neither Adam nor his sons ever knew, except his Cornish ones. You cannot imagine what a self-indulgent race is congregated on that western promontory. It is enough to spoil me for the rest of England! Well, I must forget turnip-pies, and tell you that I crossed from Ilfracombe to Swansea, and spent a week most delightfully in the vale of Neath. If you have not seen the gardens and orangery at Margam, you have not seen what would charm all England through the medium of your pen. Thence I progressed to the banks of the Wye, Tintern, Bristol, and home—where three merry faces were looking out for me, and were, I thought, after all, the prettiest sight I had seen.

When does Bentley mean to let "Our Market Town"* be heard of? He ought to fix on an early market-day. I send this parcel to his care, and trust he will not detain it very long.

Wishing you every blessing and prosperity, believe me to be, Yours very truly,

W. Howitt.

Mr. Willis *to* Miss Mitford.

Travellers' Club, Feb. 22, 1835.

My dear Miss Mitford,—Nothing has prevented my acknowledging sooner your last most delightful and kind letter but the fear of inflicting a correspondence on you, which I know too well the value of your time to take upon my conscience. It has lain on my memory, however, with a continual feeling of gratification and pleasure, and, now that some weeks have elapsed, perhaps you will permit me to "supplant the geraniums" in your mind while a letter may be read.

Thank you most sincerely for the confidence with which you write to me of your literary projects. Your instinct has

* Belford Regis?

not failed you in selecting ears that are open to everything that concerns you, either as an authoress or a woman. They are hardly separable, indeed, in your case—for you are as distinguished in the world as the "gentlewoman" among authoresses, as you are for your rank merely in literature. I have often thought you were very enviable for the universality of that opinion respecting you. You share it with Sir Philip Sydney, who was in his day, in the same way, the *gentleman* among authors.

I look with great interest for your new tragedy. I think your mind is essentially dramatic; and in that, in our time, you are alone. I know no one else who could have written "Rienzi," and I felt "Charles I." to my fingers' ends, as one feels no other modern play. If I were to "farm out" your mind (*sui generis* as your village sketches are), I would have a tragedy every year.

You very kindly suggest a book to me on England. I cannot do it, and I will convince you of it in a moment. I have been overwhelmed with kindness from the first step on the shores of this country, and I have seen everything *en beau.* Not falsely, but quite seriously, I could not with truth express myself except in superlative admiration of everything in England; and this, though a true view, would seem in a book like a picture without shade—insipid. Besides, my countrymen would tear me in pieces if I were to say in print a tenth part of what I feel on the subject. And then my whole experience has been in a vein of magnificent, but still *private,* hospitality, and I could not make a book interesting without trenching on what is sacred. I have a great reverence for household gods. Still, I am writing constantly for an American periodical (the *New York Mirror*) sketches of distinguished people, etc., etc., and these will convey to my countrymen the most of what I feel and see, and in a shape which will never reach England. I am flattered all the same by your suggestion *en même temps.*

I met Jane Porter and Miss Aiken and Tom Moore, and a troop more of *beaux esprits,* yesterday at dinner. What an intoxicating life it is! I never shall be content elsewhere. Any other country now would unsphere me.

I hope to see you in town, and really feel a strong disposition to flatter myself that I might secure your lasting friendship. If the sincerest admiration and the most kindly leaning of heart towards you are at all provocative of return, I may already write myself, dear Miss Mitford,

Faithfully your friend, N. P. Willis.

Mary Howitt *to* Miss Mitford.

Nottingham, April 17, 1835.

My dear Miss Mitford,—I meant to have written you a long letter relating to ballads and tragedies, ancient and modern, on which subject I have a desire to say something; but I will not do so at this time, lest my wisdom should be thrown away, seeing this letter will reach you at a moment when you will be occupied with other thoughts. I therefore present myself before you only to assure you of our best, our kindest, wishes for your complete success on Easter Monday night. Could I untrammel myself from circumstances which are as little controlled as the winds of heaven, I would myself be in London to witness your triumph. As it is, I can only be present in spirit, a far less satisfactory mode than in body; but you may be assured I shall be there, though not visible to your eyes.

The title of your new English opera has not yet reached us, but I have a feeling what the kind of subject will be—full of freshness, beauty, and happiness, with just enough trouble to enhance all the felicity which crowns the piece. I hear (in fancy) the English songs, the English melodies. I see the English hall, the village, the people—a peep into an English Arcadia. I see peasants haymaking, sunshine, summer flowers, trees full of leaf, and everything that gives us a sense of peace, happiness, and festivity; a wedding procession from an old hall—marriage, songs and dances, the ringing of bells heard in joyous bursts through the merry music of the village festival. All these happy images and joyful sounds are present to my mind, dear Miss Mitford, when I think of *your* English opera, and it seems to my fancy well worth a journey to London to see and hear anything so full of the amenities of human life, so fresh, so pure,

so inspiriting as you would make it—such scenes and such life as many of Claude Lorraine's pictures are full of. You will laugh at me, I dare say, and tell me I am as far from the mark as I was when I, in my simplicity, took the people of your village for living men and women and children. I am half ashamed of my credulity now; I ought to have known enough of author-craft to be sure all was not truth which seemed like it, but that the skill of the master consisted most in creating what looked most like truth.

Are you not delighted with the patronage Sir Robert Peel has shown to literary men and women? Here it is that the Tories are superior to the Liberals. How different was their conduct when they deprived those veteran authors—of whom Coleridge and William Roscoe were two—of the pension they received from the Royal Society of Literature. Sir Robert Peel has done great honor to himself. I grant that the pensions are small, but to persons of inexpensive habits, as some of these are, quite sufficient to make them comparatively rich. But it is the spirit of the gift which charms me. Statesmen ought to know that a part of a nation's strength, a great deal of a nation's glory, is in the hands of its literary men; and where literature is honored by the rulers it will also be honored by its people. Sir Robert Peel has acted nobly; these pensions are not enough for bribes, and demand no compromise of principle. I regard them as an honor done to literature, honorable alike to the giver and the receiver.

Go on, dear Miss Mitford, with your writings, which are so entirely English, which do our English hearts good to read, and which must make our national manners, scenes, and feelings so familiar and so delightful to foreigners, and you will abundantly deserve, and assuredly shall receive, a handsome annuity from some future premier—heaven knows! but I fear it will be long before a Whig or a Radical will do half as much. It is my honest opinion that they think us writers, who meddle neither with Church or State, Political Economy or Population, as little better than house-sparrows that the village church-warden will buy at a farthing a head.

You honor greatly my mention of our beautiful crocuses.

I wish now you could see a wild tulip, which is native to the same meadows, though it does not flower there. I saw yesterday three, which had been removed to a garden, and after three years' cultivation produced the most splendid yellow tulip I ever saw. I would fain send you a garland of such English flowers, for the love I bear your English opera.

Good-bye, and may every good fortune attend you. My husband unites in every kind wish and messages of love, if you will accept them. I write to you in town; but you must make kind remembrances acceptable to your father from my husband. I am, dear Miss Mitford,

Yours, M. HOWITT.

P.S.—I am sure you congratulate me on my happiness in finding myself so handsomely used in *Blackwood's Magazine*. *You* cannot tell, you always have lived in the sunshine of public favor, how charming such a notice as this is. It is almost worth while to have sat in the darkness to experience afterwards the breaking-in of light.

It may be interesting to compare the picture which Mrs. Howitt here supposes Miss Mitford to draw of a country wedding with an actual description of one which I have found among Miss Mitford's letters, written at a later date to Miss Barrett:

"I have been to-day, for an hour, to sweet Lucy Anderdon's wedding-breakfast. My father insisted on my going. I could not go with them to church, or, rather, I could not get courage to leave him for so long. It was a beautiful scene—the bride exquisitely fair, and modest, and graceful—the bridegroom a joyous, animated young man, a very impersonation of happiness. Six bridesmaids, all so young and so pretty, and crowds of elegant men and lovely women tastefully dressed, a beautiful house and place, the very banquet a picture — bells, bands of music, village schools, children strewing flowers, and all that is pleasant to the eye and to the mind; but sweet, sweet Lucy the charm of all! May God bless her! Among our parting words—ay, when parting from the father and mother to whom she is all—she said

to me, 'The moment you hear how Miss Barrett is, write to me.' May Heaven bless her! I like *him;* he seems thoroughly open-hearted, good, and kind—very different from her, and perhaps the better. The father and mother approve it thoroughly, and were happier under it than I could have thought. I could not help crying; I never can when I see joy."

N. P. Willis *to* Miss Mitford.

Athenæum, London, April 22, 1835.

My dear Miss Mitford,—I am anxious to see your play and your next book, and I quite agree with you that the drama is your *pied*, though I think laurels, and spreading ones, are sown for you in every department of writing. Nobody ever wrote better prose, and what could not the author of "Rienzi" do in verse? I should like to talk over this with you.

For myself I am far from considering myself regularly embarked in literature, and if I can live without it, or ply any other vocation, shall vote it a thankless trade, and save my "entusymussy"* for my wife and children—when I get them. I am at present steeped to the lips in London society, going to everything, from Devonshire House to a publisher's dinner in Paternoster Row, and it is not a bad *olla podrida* of life and manners. I dote on "England and true English," and was never so happy or so at a loss to find a minute for care or forethought.

I really have ten thousand things I wish to write about or talk about to you; but a letter is a needle's point to dance upon, and I must keep all my flourishes till I see you. No letter is so small, however, that I cannot express in it my happiness and pride in your friendship, and I beg you to believe, dear Miss Mitford, that your kindness is appreciated and your regard sought by no one more sensitively than,

Faithfully and always yours, N. P. Willis.

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* Enthusiasm.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

May 14 [1835?].

William is busy about his "Rural Life," and to my mind it promises extremely well. I think you will like it. I never told you that his birthday and yours fall on the same day—the 18th of December; and last year we honored them together, and a very pleasant household festival we made, wishing many a time we had you with us.

But I meant to have told you, moreover, that the Star of Bethlehem, a few petals of which you sent, grows here in these meadows. How beautiful these wild-flowers are!

Good-bye, dear Miss Mitford; I have yet a deal to say about tragedies and ballads, but that I leave to another time. God bless you! I am, affectionately,

M. HOWITT.

P.S.—William sends his love, if you will accept it, and best and kindest regards to Dr. Mitford.

MRS. HOFLAND *to* MISS MITFORD.

Kensington, June 14, 1835.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Exactly as I received your very dear note I was sitting down to tell you an incident, and I must tell it you before I thank you for it—*i.e.*, for the note.

On Sunday night my good man called aloud in his sleep something which was uttered in a very exulting tone; therefore, though he awoke me in the next room, I did not think I ought to awaken him to explain it. He very seldom dreams, and, unlike me, never is sorrowful in his sleep when he does. The next morning, however, I said, "What could you be shouting about before sunrise—have you any recollection of it?" "Oh, yes; I saw Stephen Lane at Lord's among the cricketers; he is a fine, athletic young fellow, and I called out to everybody, 'Look at Stephen Lane, look at Stephen Lane.'" Now he had said before he went to bed, "I shall go to Lord's ground to-morrow," and I had answered, "I wish Miss Mitford was going with you," having often heard him wish you were going, and perhaps he fell

asleep musing on you and the said Stephen. Be that as it may, it is evident you had given him a strong impression; indeed, it is so strong he describes the Stephen of his vision as accurately as possible, which is in fact Stephen in his young days—strong and tall, and active and joyous. In my early life it so happened that in Sheffield we had some butchers just like him, and there was a very clever satirical poem which began—

> "In a fair country stands a filthy town,
> By bugs and butchers held in high renown"—

and which I never recollect without seeing in my mind's eye perhaps the three very handsomest samples of *man*, as to person, I have seen in the course of my whole life, and, what is more, not one of the three was a vulgar man or of deficient manners.

I have just finished Fanny Kemble's books, and when I say that I read them the next after your most charming volumes, and was amused, and on the whole much pleased with them, I am sure they are meritorious, let the critics say what they may. When I saw her on the stage I could not admire her, for the life of me, though I thought her clever; but if she can follow you, and not prove (as Mrs. Norton does) a flat, uninteresting, almost mawkish picture of fine folks, in which the truth and fine writing (however good) leave you weary and dull, she must be good, *malgré* occasional roughness and hasty conclusion, the result of youth and inexperience.

It is quite evident that on her arrival she did not like the Americans, because she had not been accustomed to a people who, full of the higher energies and better characteristics of our common nature, were deficient, not in intellect, but in forms and conventional points—who were, in fact, what we were half a century ago; but, as she goes on, you see she becomes better informed, better in conception, and, as she is evidently honest in all things, she speaks what she feels and thinks. There is in her a love for nature, a passion for flowers, a power of rising above earth and earthly things, a contempt for the drudgery of her profession, and an estima-

tion of the poetic character. It is her affliction to represent, not to *originate*, which bespeaks her mind superior to her station. During all the first volume I felt sorry that she lived in America; in the second I see she may live there and be happy also.

Mr. Dilke might find *sentences* and *phrases* of puerility, the repetitions are childish, and the opinions ill-formed—nay, the very language, which is that of an half-educated girl, is undeniably bad; but along with this there is a raciness, simplicity, and downrightness very attractive.

The best account I have read of America, as it *now* is, I have found in a book written by H. Tudor, Esq. (a townsman of my own whom I knew very well in his early life, some thirty years since). He is their warm admirer, but, of course, he found some things not quite *comme il faut.* Now—how should they be so in the new and peculiar state in which they stand?—to me, as the world in which the *poor* can live and *thrive*, they are all glorious.

Thank you a thousand times for the verses I have sent to New York. I think it probable the publication of "The Pearl" may cut my book out, but there is room for both to a certain point; at all events, I personally wished them to try, but I have told them I do no more. I find Newman, who bought my stories of Longmans, has sold a great many to New York, which accounts for their being anxious to get my name as editor; but, indeed, my child's tales had long had a run there, which accounts for Pilbrow and Illman wishing to try the work once more. In point of fact the binding never is done well, and in that alone they failed. The book is full as good as any here, and very much more abundant in matter. I saw the other day at Mr. Linton's a journal (which sells there for fourpence English) most admirable in every respect, containing reviews, anecdotes, descriptions, etc., all very good, far better paper and printing than ours, with a neat back into the bargain. With Willis's "Melanie," etc., I have been delighted, and indeed affected, more than with any poetry I ever read in my life. I wonder whether he is the gentleman I met at Mr. Wilson's when I went to spend an evening there with Miss Edgeworth. I

remember there a young, stylish-looking man (whom I set down as a nobleman or as an Oxford man), but he was introduced to me as Mr. Somebody, an American from Philadelphia. He was, however, my beau-ideal of a gentleman, somewhat a *leetle* too much dressed; but he was young and handsome, and it became him well. He was a man moving everywhere in our aristocratic circles—this is about three or four years since.

When I used to spend a month or two at the time at St. Leonard's, the house was always full of lords and ladies; as one went another came. I always found them very, very pleasant in conduct and manners, the women lively and agreeable, but the men what I should call dull. Old Lady Cork told me, "she could not imagine how I got on so well, for people of my description were always expected to *toady* or *fiddle*, and she couldn't see that I took the trouble to do either." I told her that I was too old and too honest for either, yet it was plain I did get on.

July 6.

The inside sheet has been written a long time, and I could not get a frank, and I cannot rewrite it, and have nothing else to say, save that your work is the only one going at our libraries. I am reading Mr. Beckford's last, and am exceedingly pleased with it. In the other sheet I was answering your question—"Did not Mr. Hofland think our aristocracy the most amiable and sensible in manners?"—by speaking of my own experience first during a long period in which I went (when I could raise dresses) to Lord Harcourt's. He exactly agrees with you. He finds Lord and Lady Carnarvon most amiable, and to him as friendly as possible. During the time of his fever I used to receive the very kindest notes from Lord C., entering into all the particulars of his case, and telling me how his own health was, just as if we had been old friends. So far as I have seen, they are the very pleasantest people to live with. I do not know so sweet a young woman as Lady Jemima Eliot; she calls and sits with me half an hour now and then, and treats me almost with affection, purely because she fancies my books may do her children good.

The Thompsons, with whom my cousin, Miss Rolls, lives, are the best people in the world from all I can hear, and Smith tells me that, since Lord Beresford's marriage, he is become the most agreeable, kind-hearted creature that ever was born. All the world knows he used to be stiff and proud enough.

Miss Agnes Strickland was here yesterday, very wroth at the publishers of her "Pilgrim of Walsingham," being sure that a work so highly spoken of must sell well; but I think she is mistaken, for it does not always follow.

Mrs. Hall has got home, and better, from Brighton, but her left hand is still contracted.

I find Miss Landon wrote Lady Stepney's book—I never read it. She had a hundred pounds, and grumbles much, as she says it took her more time than writing a new one would have done.

Mr. Hofland bids me thank you very much for the flower-seeds. He will send you some clarkia, if you have none. It flourishes much with us, and is, I think, a very elegant flower.

My review of "Belford Regis" is to be in next month, the *Lady's Magazine* man says. We go to Yorkshire on the 21st. Mr. H. is exceedingly harassed with the Suffolk Street Gallery, which, by-the-bye, many people say (those who know) is far better than the Royal Academy this year. I have not been yet to the latter, but I have heard your picture spoken of by many, and always in high terms of praise. I am glad you have heard from Miss James, and are on terms with Macready. The magazine put in all the beautiful songs I sent them from "Sadak"—they are very sweet ones.*

My master begs his kind regards to you and the doctor, to whom pray offer mine, and believe me,

Your truly affectionate friend, B. Hofland.

Mrs. Howitt *to* Miss Mitford.

July 7, 1835.

My dear Miss Mitford,—I am sure you have thought me long, very long, in replying to your last, but the truth is

* "Songs from 'Sadak and Kalasrade,'" an opera by Miss Mitford.

we are at a little loss to know best how to serve you respecting "Belford Regis." We live far more out of any clique, far more without connections, literary or influential, than yourself, and as the volumes had been reviewed both in the *Athenæum* and *Tait's Magazine*—the only periodicals we have any connection with—and the newspapers *here* are so utterly worthless, and move in so circumscribed a sphere that no notice they might give of your book could serve you, we felt a little at a loss to know how to do it, and yet so desirous of doing something as not to be willing to give it up. Besides, William was just about going to London, and it was thought best not to write to you till after his return. I am now doing so. He found "Belford Regis" very much liked, and had a good deal of talk with Mr. Bentley both about it and your other works, and wherein the peculiar excellence of them lies—all new light thrown in upon the twilight of the poor publisher's brain. I expect he will look upon you henceforth as a most philosophical writer, who is to do signal service in the regeneration of English society.

I believe a set of paragraphs will go through divers provincial papers—their names I cannot tell—but William has put them in a train to do so. Unfortunately, Mr. Bentley does not send his books to our *only* London newspaper friends, so that extracts cannot be given.

But the most important thing, I think, is a paper on you and your writings, which W. is to furnish to the *Athenæum*, and for which you may look in about a fortnight—so prepare yourself.

I am writing in great haste, having an accumulation of work on my hands, and yet being unwilling to delay writing to you any longer. I shall send you an account some day of how we spent Whitsun-Monday—it would make a beautiful bit of English country life for you.

Good-bye, dear Miss Mitford, and with best wishes for you and kindest regards to Dr. Mitford, to your conservatory, your geraniums, your bay-tree, your busy bees, your village, your town, and all that appertains to you, which is about to be set forth with due honor,

I am very truly yours, M. Howitt.

P.S.—William is writing about you this very moment, but as yet I have not heard a word of it, so I shall tell no tales.

The following lines, written apparently by one of Miss Mitford's friends, but bearing no signature, were found among her letters :

A WISH (*too personal, perhaps*).

I fain would sing before I sleep
  A little song that shall survive
The heart that gave it voice, and keep
  My memory, when I'm dust, alive.

For thee, Leona dear, I fain
  Would leave a little lay behind,
To waken up the past again,
  With all its music, in thy mind.

It's sad, sweet music—such alone
  As we on earth may hope to hear
Where mingles e'en in mirth a tone
  Of mourning—dirge-like, yet most dear.

Dear, while death's phantom shade, that lies
  O'er all, brings out some sparks divine
Within our souls, as in the skies
  Night's shadow gives the stars to shine.

Then call not my ambition vain,
  If I would shun the common lot
To be a linklet in the chain
  Of life—break off—and be forgot.

Among the many millioned throng
  Who on the world's wide stage have moved,
I fain would sing a little song
  To tell that I have lived and loved.

CHAPTER XII.

LETTERS FROM MISS SEDGWICK, N. P. WILLIS, W. HOWITT, AND GEORGE TICKNOR.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

Stockbridge, Aug. 6, 1835.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—The blanks there are in our correspondence are not blanks in our relations, I trust, for with me they are filled with many pleasant recollections, many flights of thoughts which, bless them! have wings, to you, and many, many earnest desires for your happiness and prosperity in all your doings. Have you been conscious within the last days of July of any particular absence of mind? Has that spirit of yours which so loves to wander over the gifted and *enjoyed* places of Nature and blend itself with all that is happy and good and beautiful in the social relations — has it not been conscious of any unseen influence? if not, then, like poor Ophelia, I am the more deceived, for when I was sitting with Miss Martineau on Laurel Hill (a beautiful eminence that rises almost from the midst of our village), and looking from Sacrifice Rock (a name that our young people have bestowed on the rocky summit, where the poor Indian girl of my "Hope Leslie" lost her arm)—when we were sitting there, and looking down on the lovely meadows, we talked of you, and wished for you, and when I drove our blessed friend down a beautiful ravine between a mountain and the brimful Housatonic, oh, then how we wished for you, and thought of your drives in your pony-phaeton! and when we issued from the mountain caves (a chasm between our mountains where some convulsion of Nature has piled the rocks one on another so long ago that trees have sprung from their crevices and died, and other trees have sprung from them, and the rocks are covered with

mosses and plumed with ferns)—when we came out of this wild solitude and looked upon the wide-spread, smiling scene before us, the yellow harvest-fields on the hill-side, the rich meadows, our clear, little river contriving to wind in every possible way through them, so, like an ingenious child, to stay till the last minute, and the white houses of our village peeping here and there through the trees that embower each habitation, and the rustic bridge, and the little island that seems to rest there for companionship, and—but, bless me! here I am on the third page of my letter; the burden of it all is, my dearest Miss Mitford, that wherever we were we thought and talked of you. Miss M., after wandering through our Southern and Western States, proceeded on her way to Boston. She promises to go to see you, and tell you all about us. We do not know whether to be most grieved or grateful that she whom we expected only to admire should make us all love her, the pang of separation comes so close upon the birth of affection! I have not yet parted from her; we are to go to the [*torn*] Hills together in September, and I shall see the last of her in New York.

Our little community have been delighting themselves with your "Belford Regis;" accept their united thanks for it. Is it not good now and then during a public career to get genuine individual gratitude? The book is republished rather shabbily by Carey. I am in great hopes that we shall get our ungracious laws altered at the next congressional session, so that you English contributors to our advantage shall get some remuneration for your pains. I have a new novel, "The Linwoods," waiting till some portion of our novel-reading public return to their city homes, to be published. I have given directions for a copy to be sent you. It has at least two good lines in it—good beyond all question—the motto, which is from your beautiful "Rienzi." By the way, I had the pleasure last winter of reading the very copy you gave Miss Phillips, and by the way, too, it is said that this young lady, with whom I have no personal acquaintance, is about to marry one of our rich merchants.

We are to have a visit from the Butlers shortly. You have seen her journal, and your opinion is more favorable

than that of her English reviewers, is it not? Its faults are juvenilities, and the consequences of unfavorable circumstances; but are there not unquestionable evidences of a most extraordinary mind and a noble spirit? There should be, for she possesses them. Do not believe any of the gossip they print about her.

Your friend Theodore is here, and is to be married within a month; we are just in the midst of bridal festivities, which Miss M. stayed to help us enjoy. A pretty little niece of mine was tied on Tuesday evening to a youth towards seven feet high; but this is the only disparity between them, and disparities that can be measured are not formidable. Kate gave me a long message to you, which I have neither room nor time for. Will you offer my best wishes to your father, and believe me truly yours, E. M. SEDGWICK.

N. P. WILLIS *to* MISS MITFORD.

Manor House, Lee, Sunday, Aug. 10, 1835.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Though, as I have said before, I am *principled* against inveigling better-employed pens into correspondence, I have been longer in answering your last most delightful letter even than "good resolution" should exact. I have been led on from week to week, however, by the hope of fixing on a day to advise you of a flit from London and a visit to Reading, but though others have made pilgrimages to Our Village (*vide Athenæum*), *my* scollop-shell still hangs on the wall. I have just now decided, to the prejudice of a proposed trip up the Rhine, to pass a week or two with Sir Charles Throckmorton somewhere in the neighborhood of Stratford-on-Avon, and one very great inducement was the *en passant* of Reading; I do not know exactly when, but somewhere about the first week in September I shall be on the way, and I will write to you a few days previous, and take tea with you in passing. I had a letter from America the other day, wondering how I could possibly have been a year in England without a visit to Our Village. It is for the same reason, I suppose, that people pass their lives within the sound of Niagara and never see it. Your last book still rolls on, gathering golden opinions,

and I, for one, thank you, for I have been passing the last fortnight in the country, and perhaps there is no book in the world so pleasant to be on the grass with and read to a charming woman. I have only grudged the transfer of leaves from my right hand to my left, and if you had heard the "*Is that all?*" of my listener as I closed the last volume, you would have felt that you had not lived in vain—as who has, who has given pleasure to the world, or beguiled weariness, or refined the aspect of life? I have been always in the neighborhood of London, but I have never enjoyed life so keenly as in the variety of excursions we have made within the last month. What a treasure of beauty England is! What, in other lands, is comparable to Knowle Park, Bromley Hill (Lord Farnborough's), North Cray, and a dozen more of these enchanting paradises? To me there is no happier day than one passed in loitering over the grounds of a superb English park. If I was married, or had any "sweet spirit for my minister," I would spend all my summers thus. There is no travel on the Continent that is comparable to it for enjoyment, and objects worthy of attention. I have nearly made up my mind to remain in England till the spring, having become rather a sunflower in the five years' wanderings in softer climates, and dreading an American winter.

With my best respects to your father, believe me, my dear Miss Mitford (in the hope of soon seeing you),

Yours most faithfully, N. P. Willis.

Mr. W. Howitt *to* Miss Mitford.

Nottingham, Sept. 10, 1835.

Dear Miss Mitford,—I am very glad that the paper in the *Athenæum* pleased you. Had I seen more of your pleasant neighborhood and people it should have been much better. My peep at you was so slight that I could only hope you would pardon the great blunders and the greater omissions it must contain for the simple intention. There are various errors of the press, which make, as usual, plenty of nonsense, such as making your noble bay-tree *simple* instead of ample. All the nonsense pray lay to the charge

of the printer's imp. I was tied up, too, about "Belford Regis"—the *Athenæum* having given two notices of it. I felt a delicacy in making more than a passing paragraph of it, for those critics, the very best of them, are, as we people here say, "sore chaps." Well, I am glad it pleased you and your dear father—that is all the *pay I want* for it; and some other time I shall hope to be earlier in the field for you, when I can have fair play.

Well, what do you think of our Nottingham men now! I shall send you a paper to-morrow containing the account of the great cricket-match played here between Sussex and Nottingham. Perhaps you may have seen in the papers that the Nottingham club challenged the Sussex, and beat them about a fortnight ago at Brighton, and now they have beaten them again here. The match commenced on Monday, and was finished yesterday (Wednesday) at about half-past four o'clock. We wished you had been there—a more animated sight of the kind you never saw. On Sunday morning, as we were dressing, we saw a crowd going up the street, and immediately perceived that in the centre of it were the Sussex cricketers, arrived by the London coach, and going to the inn kept by one of our Nottingham cricketers. They looked exceedingly interesting, I assure you, being a set of very fine fellows, in their white hats, and with all their trunks, carpet-bags, and cloaks, coming, as we verily believed, to be beaten. Our interest was strongly excited, and on Monday morning we set off to the cricket-ground, which lies about a mile from the town, in the Forest, as it is still called, though not a tree is left upon it—a long, furzy common, crowned at the top with about twenty windmills, and descending in a steep slope to a fine level —round which the race-course runs, and within the race-course lies the cricket-ground, and the military ground for the troop of horse which always occupy our barracks. Each end of the cricket-ground was completely enclosed by booths, and all up the forest hill were scattered booths and tents with flags flying, fires blazing, pots boiling, ale-barrels standing, and carts and asses and people bringing still more good things, ranged at the farther side of the cricket-ground.

I had the strongest idea of an amphitheatre filled with people that I ever had. In fact, it *was* an amphitheatre. Along each side of the ground ran a bank sloping down to it; and it and the tents and booths at the end were occupied with a dense mass of people, and all up the hill were groups, and on the race-stand an eager, forward-leaning mass. There were said to be twenty thousand people, all as silent as the ground beneath them, except when some exploit of the players produced a sudden thunder of applause. The playing was beautiful. Mr. Ward, the late M.P. for the City of London, came from the Isle of Wight to see the play, and declared himself highly delighted. But nothing was so beautiful as the sudden shout and rush of the crowd when the last decisive notch was gained; to see the scorers suddenly snatch up their chairs, and run off with them towards the players' tent; to see the bat of Bart Goode, the batsman on whom the fate of the game depended, spinning up in the air, where he had sent it in the ecstasy of the moment; and the crowd, that the instant before were as fixed and as silent as the earth itself, spread all over the green space, where the white figures of the players had till then been so gravely and, apparently, coolly contending—speeding with a murmur as of a sea, and over their heads, amid all the deafening clamor and confusion, the carrier-pigeon, with the red ribbon tied to its tail, the signal of loss or gain—I know not which—beating round and round, so as to ascertain its precise situation, and then flying off to bear the tidings to some strongly interested quarter. Was it not a beautiful sight? Should you not have been delighted to see it?

My thoughts on such occasions generally fly beyond the immediate place and time, and begin to contemplate consequences, and I could not help seeing what a wide difference twenty years has produced in the character of the English population. What a contrast is this play to bull-baiting, dog and cock fightings! So orderly, so manly, so generous in its character. It is the nearest approach to the athletic games of the Greeks that we have made, and the effect on the general mass of the people by the emulation it will excite must be excellent. There is something very

beautiful in one distant county sending its peaceful champions to contend with those of another in a sport that has no drawback of cruelty or vulgarity in it, but has every recommendation of skill, taste, health, and generous rivalry. You, dear Miss Mitford, have done a great deal to promote this better spirit, and you could not have done more had you been haranguing Parliament, and bringing in bills for the purpose.

Mary sends her love, and wishes you could have given us the private history of all the players, their loves, their wives, and their particular characters and achievements. As Bart Goode threw up his bat, "There," she exclaimed, "I hope his sweetheart or his wife sees it!" One fact you should know, for I have not got the newspaper yet, and don't know that it will be there. A Sussex batsman—Taylor, I believe—sent the ball straight through a tent at the end of the ground, cutting through the canvas on each side as clean as a cannon-shot, and smashing six bottles of porter in its passage. With kind regards to Dr. Mitford,

Yours very truly, W. HOWITT.

MR. WILLIS *to* MISS MITFORD.

London, Sept. 22, 1835.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—You will think me the most perfidious of men, for I have all but passed your door on a visit to Warwickshire, and date, as you see, once more from London. Having confessed my sin, extenuation is the next step. I was later than I had promised myself, and was expected by Sir Charles Throckmorton to join Miss Porter in a tour to Kenilworth, Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon, etc., etc. Miss Porter has expressed the strongest wish to know you, and I had concocted a delightful dream of bringing her down to Reading and taking up our abode at the nearest inn for a week on my return from Coughton Court. This would have been agreeable to all parties; *but*, unluckily, I went to a picnic just before starting, fell in love with a blue-eyed girl, and (after running the gauntlet successfully through France, Italy, Greece, Germany, Asia Minor, Turkey, etc., etc.) I renewed my youth, and became "a suitor for

love." I am to be married (*sequitur*) on Thursday week. Do you excuse me for not coming to see you? I brought Miss Porter back, but it was to chaperon me to my wedding.

The lady who is to take me, as the Irish say, "in a present," is some six years younger than myself, gentle, religious, relying, and unambitious. She has never been whirled through the gay society of London, so is not giddy or vain. She has never swum in a gondola or written a sonnet, so has a proper respect for those who have. She is called pretty, but is more than that in *my* eyes; sings as if her heart were hid in her lips, and *loves* me. *Voilà*, my programme in little. When you come to London, or when *we* (how delightful to write in the plural *now!*)—when *we* come to Reading, I am bent on your liking her. She already (as who does not that reads?) loves you.

We are bound to Paris for a month (because I think amusement better than reflection when a woman makes a doubtful bargain), and by November we return to London and its neighborhood for the winter, and in the spring sail for America to see my mother. I have promised to live mainly on this side of the water, and shall return in the course of a year to try what contentment may be sown and reaped in a green lane in Kent. Will you come and live with us now and then?

What a charming book dear Miss Sedgwick has given us!

Direct to me in London still, and believe me, dear Miss Mitford, Ever most faithfully yours,

N. P. Willis.

The following is a copy of some lines among Miss Mitford's papers, which may possibly have been written by Jane Porter:

Past is Past.

Disinter no dead delight,
Bring no past to life again;
Those red cheeks with woe are white,
Those ripe lips are pale with pain.

Vex not then the buried bliss
(Changed to more divine regret),
Sweet thoughts come from where it lies,
Underneath the violet.

This was suggested by the circumstance of our endeavoring to revive an old amusement in the absence (by death) of one of our blithest companions—the saddest attempt at happiness I ever made. J. P.

GEORGE TICKNOR *to* MISS MITFORD.

Clarendon Hotel, Bond Street, Oct. 15, 1835.

DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I received from our poor friend Kenyon, two days ago, when we reached London, your kind note and the copy of Sergeant Talfourd's "Ion" that accompanied it. Many thanks for both of them.

I send you with this all Dr. Channing's works, and the little series of four small volumes in which Miss Sedgwick's "Home" is to be found, and I send them very gladly, both because I think them good and because the last of them, "Gleams of Truth," is a practical illustration of the principles touching the relations of the more favored and less favored classes of society, which are so ably and so beautifully set forth in the separate sermon of Dr. Channing which I send with them.

In the matter of Mr. Webster, I am not so fortunate. I wanted very much to find two or three of his public addresses and two or three of his greater speeches on broad constitutional questions, that you might have judged what is the grasp of his mind. But both the booksellers and my private friends have failed me. I shall still search, and, if I am successful, I shall send you the pamphlets, or any of them I may find. But I am somewhat mortified to be obliged to say that I fear I shall not succeed.

It is not possible within the compass of a note, or even within the compass of many sheets of paper, to give you the idea I should be glad to present of the growth of Mr. Webster's mind and character. It requires detail, and would then read like a romance. But the general facts are that his father had been an officer in the war of 1756–63 against the French in America, and, after it was over, went to the very frontier of civilization, and, plunging into the forest,

established himself and his household goods. There Mr. Webster was born. Schools there were none at first, and those to which he had access afterwards were humble and poor enough. But he began to rise from the first, and, though his father was always too poor to give him any substantial help, he continued to rise through all obstacles, and made his way to college, helped an elder brother to come there, and has, in short, by the mere effort of his own mind and character, raised himself to the place he now occupies in the regard of his countrymen. It has been a beautiful and a consistent course throughout, and, though I would gladly see him President of the United States, I do not think that the office would add anything to the reputation he enjoys with the wisest portion of our society.

But I am talking too much. Your kindness, of which I have already so many proofs, must excuse me. Please to give our best respects to your father, and accept Mrs. T.'s very sincere regards, and my own and my daughter's best acknowledgments. Yours very faithfully,

GEO. TICKNOR.

P.S.—We shall none of us ever forget the truly delightful evening we spent in your cottage at "Our Village."

This Mr. Ticknor was the celebrated author of "The History of Spanish Literature,"* and he had paid Miss Mitford a visit on the 26th of July. She writes: "An American of the highest class and the highest talent, a charming person, Mr. Ticknor of Boston, visited me the other day, on his way to Dublin to see Miss Edgeworth." Mr. Ticknor in his diary records this visit:

"We found Miss Mitford living literally in a cottage neither *ornée* nor poetical, except inasmuch as it had a small garden crowded with the richest and most beautiful profusion of flowers. She has the simplest and kindest manners, and entertained us for two hours with the most animated

* Miss Mitford says that Macaulay admired it so much that he recommended the Queen to read it.

conversation, and a great variety of anecdote, without any of the pretensions of an author by profession, and without any of the stiffness that generally belongs to single ladies of her age and reputation."

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Nov. 16, 1835.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Thank you indeed for the gift of "Ion;" the tragedy was known to us by extracts, and our desire to see it was great. We like it very much—it is a noble descendant of the noble Greek tragedy. I am sure your friend is a right-hearted, high-minded, and most richly gifted person—you are happy in such a friend. I cannot believe it possible that, after the publication of this, and the cordial manner of its reception, its author will content himself with this one proof of his talent for dramatic writing, a rare gift and a glorious one, and one in which he will excel. You will smile at me, dear Miss Mitford, but I must tell you that I rejoice at his being a married man. It is a blessed thing for a wife to have to sympathize and glorify herself in the honor of her husband. From the first poet in the land down to the successful cricketer, my feeling always is, what a proud and happy woman must his wife be! I never care to be undeceived, and told such and such a great man has a wife unworthy of him; to my feeling it is impossible. There always is a heart that rejoices over the success and honor of the gifted, and to my mind it must be a wife; therefore it is that I think Mrs. Talfourd must be a happy woman.

And is it your tragedy that is to occupy you this winter? or do you begin your great story of English life? Success to you, whatever it may be! I am taking mine ease after my summer labors, walking out every day, and enjoying the fresh air and the autumnal landscape as much as possible. It is beautiful, and as I go along among fallen and falling leaves, and get glimpses of old halls, with their goodly roofs and old gray stateliness about them, such gushes of poetry come over me, and I long so earnestly to have written or to write something which might bring livingly to the reader such ruins and such friends. Oh, my friend, if one could

but embody one's own feelings!—but you can do so in great measure. Look at all your different country rambles, at the scenery you describe in every tale you write, at the noble sentiment and natural feeling which you scatter over every page—you have done so, and you will do so yet more. I hope, if you are writing prose, you will allow yourself space enough for the working out of a longer story than you have ever yet written. I am sure you would succeed.

Have you seen Robert Nicholls's poems? If you are a reader of *Tait's Magazine*, you will see the review of them; that is a right manly and sterling volume of poetry, full of life, humor, and the noblest elements of poetry. I cannot tell you how such poems as "Arouse the Soul," "I Dare Not Scorn," and others, such of which this volume has many, affect me. It is such writing as this which makes one feel that talent is nobler than birth, and high-mindedness of more worth than gold.

William unites with me in every kind sentiment towards both you and your father. I am, dear Miss Mitford,

Yours, affectionately and gratefully,

M. Howitt.

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTERS FROM LADY DACRE, MRS. HOWITT, AND MISS SEDGWICK.

LADY DACRE was a cousin of Miss Mitford. Both she and her lord had great appreciation of literature, and collected around them a circle of authors and other celebrities. In this year, 1836, Miss Mitford mentions her having dined at Lord Dacre's, and met Joanna Baillie, Mr. Harness, Bobus Smith, and Young the actor. She was first personally introduced to Joanna Baillie in Lady Dacre's drawing-room, "where poets most do congregate." Lady Dacre herself wrote some plays and short poems;* she sketched admirably, and was a perfect Italian scholar, a friend of Ugo Foscolo. She was remarkably handsome, retaining her beauty even in old age. Miss Mitford speaks of her charm of manner and magnificent figure, and adds that she was one of the best horsewomen and "whips" in England.

The following is interesting as being the first letter written by Lady Dacre to Miss Mitford, and showing the origin of their friendship:

LADY DACRE *to* MISS MITFORD.

The Hoo, Friday, Jan. 1, 1836.

Lady Dacre presents her compliments to Miss Mitford, and (encouraged by Mr. Talbot) ventures to have recourse to her in her *extremity*. Lady D. has in vain tried to procure Mr. Talfourd's "Ion" from the London booksellers. She therefore petitions Miss Mitford to have the goodness to make interest with the author to procure her the reading of the work, of which she has heard such praise. Lady D. begs to add her congratulations to Miss Mitford, the public, and herself, that Miss Mitford should again be induced to write tragedy—to Miss M. herself, because there is no pleas-

* One of which appeared in "The Keepsake" for 1837.

ure equal to it, even to those who do it ill; what then must it be to Miss M., whose dramatic blank verse is so incomparable?

Lady D. hopes Miss Mitford is pleased with her beloved, honored, and admired friend Joanna's new publication. Lady D. is delighted with many of the dramas, the serious ones; she does not think her friend equally strong in comedy.

If Lady D. is taking a great liberty with Miss Mitford, her sister and Mr. Talbot must bear the blame.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Nottingham, Feb. 4, 1836.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—This new edition of "Our Village" I have been coveting ever since I saw the advertisement of it, and I will tell you why. It is one of those cheerful, spirited works, full of fair pictures of humanity, which, especially where there are children who love reading and being read to, becomes a household book, turned to again and again, and remembered and talked of with affection. So it is by our fireside; it is a work our little daughter has read, and loves to read, and which our little son Alfred, a most indomitable young gentleman, likes especially—not so much for its variety of character, which gives its charm to his sister's mind, but for its descriptions of the country. Everything belonging to the country is delicious in his eyes, and to his soul. He is as yet a bad reader, and therefore he is read to; and his cry is, "Read me the Copse!" or "Read me the Nutting, or a Ramble into the Country!" Such, dear Miss Mitford, being the case, when I saw the new edition advertised, I began to cast in my mind whether or not we could not buy it, for perhaps you know that *literary* people, though *makers* of books, are not extensive *buyers* thereof. You may think, then, what was my delight—and the delight of us all—when a parcel came in, the string was cut, and behold it contained no other than those long-coveted and favorite volumes! Thank you, therefore, dearest Miss Mitford; you have conferred a benefit upon our fireside which will make you even more beloved than formerly, for now we shall always have you at hand. It is a pity that the volumes do not

contain the whole of the five former. It is a pity also that the wood-cuts are not more worthy of their subjects. With these drawbacks, the volumes are extremely neatly got up, nicely and firmly bound, and that is something, when books in general are rather made for show than use. You are a fortunate woman to have a second or third edition, but not more fortunate than you deserve. Again let me thank you in the name of us all.

You ask me how does your friend like his aldermanic dignities.* Dignities there are none, not even a scarlet cloak, which, by the way, I am sure he would never have worn; the title we neither of us liked, but he was compelled into the office against his will, and now he is in he *likes* it not, because so much time is of necessity occupied, and it is so hard a warfare which he has to do, not against the Tories, but against the Whigs and even those who call themselves Radicals. I assure you I have seen more of men's selfishness and manœuvring since William has been one of the Corporation than I had any idea of. Verily, common human nature is a very common thing indeed; and these men stare and storm at him and dislike him worse by half than their most violent political enemies, because he will make them do right. We had need of your pleasant volumes to give one sunny pictures of poor human nature, after all the meanness and pettiness which it shows among the *reformers* of this *reformed* Corporation.

I have read Bulwer's "Rienzi," and yours also. I always thought your tragedy the best of your works, and I think so still. It is a glorious thing. I like Bulwer's too, very much, but unless there were historical ground for the love between a Colonna and the family of Rienzi, he has injured his work by its introduction. It is so palpably an imitation of the tragedy, and with much less effect. Adrian Colonna and Irene in the novel destroy the unity and continuity of the story—coming in and going out, and playing at a sort of bo-peep with one another. That is the weak part of the story. The loves of Nina and Rienzi were enough for a

* Mr. Howitt was an alderman of Nottingham.

stern, grave story like that; and their love and their characters are beautiful. To you, however, the originality belongs. Had you not written this tragedy, I question if this novel would have been written either. One thing, however, I see in it with pleasure, so much less of "dandyism" and of that knowing, worldly spirit which were the deformity of his Pelham novels. His mind is evidently graver, older, and wiser.

Joanna Baillie is, as you say, "a glorious old lady." She has a glorious mind. It is impossible for you to admire her more than I do; but one thing I must remark, you will see now the whole world of criticism exalt her to the skies, and not on the strength of her own noble intellect, but at the expense of every other woman who has written tragedy. It is the fashion of modern criticism: the idol of the day must be the head of a pyramid, erected on other men's fame. We shall have it in the quarterlies, and so echoed down to the commonest provincial papers. I saw it in *Blackwood's* this present month, and with indignation too. I never deny the wonderful excellence of Joanna Baillie, but no one shall persuade me that "Rienzi" is not as good as any drama by her. Do not be discouraged, dear Miss Mitford. I know how mortifying these invidious comparisons are, but everything will find its level, and thinking people will contradict by their own firesides these unjust and invidious comparisons.

I am glad that you like our friend—at least by his letters. You will like him yet more when you come to know him. For my part, I like him greatly; and, different as our tastes are in many particulars, there is so accordant and kindred a tone of spirit that we never meet without his awakening a literary inspiration. He does not suggest in words subjects, but he gives a state of mind to suggest them. You will like him too; so did Mrs. Hemans, for he, though young, was a most judicious friend and counsellor.

And now good-bye, dear Miss Mitford. Here is indeed a long scrawl for you. Give our cordial greeting to your father, and with love from my husband and Ann,

I am yours, truly and affectionately,

M. Howitt.

Mrs. Howitt introduced Henry Chorley, to whom she alludes in the above letter, to Miss Mitford, thinking that she could assist him with letters for the "Life of Mrs. Hemans," which he was then preparing.

After receiving a copy of the "Linwoods" from Miss Sedgwick, Miss Mitford sent her a critique on that work, to which the following is a reply:

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, March 9, 1836.

Thank you, my dear friend, for the kind note (with "Ion") and the letter that followed it; for the expressions of interest and affection with which they abound. They are, every one of them, folded and laid away in my heart—the right and only safe keeper of such archives. I was very much pleased with your approbation of the "Linwoods." Vanity (or, I would fain hope, something better) gives us a very nice perception and discrimination in this matter of praise. We soon get above caring for the hack reviewers, but in so far as they affect the sale of a book. They must review after a writer reaches a certain point in public favor, and they must praise, but they dole it out without one movement of the heart, as a parish officer does his allowance to the licensed pauper. If you get a real warm-hearted review, you may be sure it comes from some youth whose feelings are gushing out from a full, undrained fountain. I love young people, and because they love immeasurably. But, of all praise, commend me to that of a friend who feels a deep interest in your honor and success. If you know the coloring is deeper than you deserve, yet it is the coloring of affection, and therefore true if everything else is false. Thank you, too, for your criticisms—though very forbearing, they are valuable to me. I have heard Fanny Butler laugh at the Americanism "as he used to," but I was never before aware that "mother," "aunt," etc., without the pronoun, were peculiar to us. The ear soon becomes accustomed to a conventionalism of this sort, and the omission is positively disagreeable. Yet we must write according to the standard of our own land, if we have had the society of no other.

We have all been delighted with the tragedy of your friend. I wrote to Mrs. Butler (with your kind mention of her, and notice of Mr. Harness) some account of "Ion," and said in conclusion that if Dr. Channing could write a tragedy, it would be such a one as this. She says, in reply, "I am reading with delight Channing's book on slavery, *but* his tragedy (whenever he writes it) will be bad, and any tragedy which is such a one as he would write would, in my audacious judgment, be bad." I anticipate the reversion of her opinion when she reads "Ion." The only fault I see in it is the fault in Scott's "Rebecca," the virtue is given to another faith and another race, that Christianity alone could produce; the natural offspring of Christianity is given to a parentage barren of such progeny. But this is a slight fault, into which the most generous and philosophic mind would alone fall. How different is the effect of such a poem as this from Byron's—quite equal to his in vigor and beauty. Talfourd makes you love and reverence your species. Byron would make you hate, shun, and fear them.

My brother Robert says that "Ion" is an impersonation of Jesus Christ. He certainly is an illustration of disinterestedness, and all the attributes of spirituality.

Enter Kate from her Italian lesson, laughing and shouting, her clean frock (that was) covered with mud—a fit illustration of our horrible streets at this moment. She has measured her length, some five feet, on the Broadway pavement, but nothing ever hurts or disconcerts her. I wish I could send you her picture. She is a perfect Hebe—intelligence, health, and happiness are stamped upon her.

"Those young people are English," said a talking woman next to me at a dancing-school ball, pointing to Kate and her brother Charles, who has also the rich English complexion.

I smiled.

"Oh, they are," said she.

"I believe not, ma'am."

"Do you know them?"

"Yes."

"They must be. Are you quite sure they are not?"

I explained their relationship to me.

"Their parents are English, then?"

"No."

"Well, anyhow, the girl has been brought up in England—her voice, manner, everything is English."

I hope one day, my dear Miss Mitford, to show her to you. She is the busiest of all busy bees, and working hard at the accomplishments this winter—the piano, singing, drawing, Italian, and German—but, thank heaven, there is no expunging nature from her.

If you see Fanny Butler in England (she goes there the first of May), ask her about Kate, please, for I have a foolish desire you should know something of the child from less questionable authority than mine.

What an extraordinary acquaintance you have among the young folk! I trust that little Howitt's productions will be published, but, as you say, "children are wonderful nowadays." I am sometimes tempted to exclaim, "Is the world all grown up?—is childhood dead?" But we have some lovely specimens of this loveliest portion of existence under our own roof—the youngest, a child of four years, the drollest little sprig of Calvinism, who, having learned the terrors of the law from her nurse, threatens us, when it suits her, with "the wrath to come."

Miss Martineau has been passing the winter in Boston, and is to be here in a few days. She does not leave us till August. She has proposed to me to go to the prairies, taking Niagara *en route*, and finishing at the Falls of St. Anthony. Would you not like to go with us? That would be superlative. I *feel* (as we Yankees say) as if you were a most lovable person. Even those scurrilous wretches, the Frasers, doff their caps and greet you kindly; like Satan, when he meets Uriel, "He casts to change his proper shape." With this I shall send, more especially for your father's amusement, the first year's publication of our *National Gallery*. I say for his, for, as the characters are for the most part military or political, they cannot have much interest for you. I made a singular acquaintance with the person who takes my packet to England soon after the publication of "The Linwoods." I received an anonymous letter from a youth, communicating

the disastrous fate of his love—he had addressed a cousin; she rejected him. He gave both their characters, and her letter—a most admirable one, a model—and appealed to me as a Daniel in the *cour d'amour*. He wished to know if I thought her letter final. Poor youth! the case appeared to me perfectly hopeless, and so I told him, and advised him to be satisfied with the happiness of even an unrequited love for such a woman. He took my advice, and has since been to see me and thank me for it. Still, his love is so deep and true that hope is not a necessary ingredient in it.

Give my best respects to your father, and thank him for doing me the honor of reading my book.

Mrs. Butler is living a quiet domestic life, idolizing her sweet baby, and preparing for her visit home. I fear it will be hard work for her to come back again.

I have made a terrific piece of work of criticising "Ion." I faltered from a feeling of my presumption.

This letter is most unreasonably crammed, and yet I have left much unsaid, my dear friend, that should have expressed to you how delightful your letters are to me, and how deep an interest I take in anything that concerns you. Accept the greeting of all my tribe.

Yours truly, C. M. Sedgwick.

P.S.—I ought to have told you that none of my family suffered by our big bonfire this winter. The truth is, that such is the prosperity of the country, so unprecedented that of the city, that there is little apparent loss. It is shared by thousands, and ruinous to very few.

Lady Dacre *to* Miss Mitford.

2 Chesterfield Street, March 11, 1836.

I believe I am doing an odd thing, dear Miss Mitford, in enclosing to you a letter from the glorious Joanna, in which she agrees with me in all I said of your "Rienzi." The *knocking your heads together* is an allusion to my saying I should wish to bring you together if you came to town, and to "knock your clever heads together." She agrees with me also that "Ion" is of too highly poetical a cast for the

uneducated people who form the mass of an audience. I saw her "Separation" the other night, on the whole done little justice to, and remarked that an infinitely deeper and more breathless attention was given by an overflowing pit to that ultra abomination, "Quasimodo." The rack and the wheel, and the beautiful scenery, and the skipping gypsies, and the singing, and the bustle and the noise, were more their penny's worth. The scenery, I must say, was equally beautiful for the "Separation." I think it would be an *acting* play in good hands. At least two essential scenes are equal to anything she has ever written. I heard them read by Mr. Young, so I know what they are capable of. I am not sorry you have turned aside to a novel as infinitely a more *sure* card to play at this moment (in a pecuniary point of view); and perhaps, by the time your tragedy is ready, some better actors may have turned up, and our taste may have improved. The theatre is at so low an ebb, it must mend, I think. Even our *sleeves* are coming to their senses; having crammed into them more than in our skirts, we are going to have them the size of the limb they are to contain. So we may find that, as we cannot cram more bad taste and immorality into our dramas, we shall be content to return to real tragedy and comedy.

Excuse all this scribbling and nonsense. I am watching a little granddaughter's dancing-lesson at the same time.

Pray return my letter enclosed to Lord Dacre, The Hoo, Welwyn, Herts, to which place we return to-morrow, and believe me Your sincere admirer, B. DACRE.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Wood Leighton, June 11, 1836.

You see, my dearest Miss Mitford, by the name at the head of this, where we now are—at this, veritably the most woodland, and quiet, and old-fashioned of English towns. If you look for it on the map of England, or even of Staffordshire, you will not find it, but instead you will find Uttoxeter—a queer name, is it not?—that is the true place, and of a truth so exactly is the character of the town and the country round described and depicted that I was amazed

at the fidelity. The fame of the book, if it ever reaches this place, has not reached it at present, so I walk among its people without exciting half the sensation I should do if they knew that their whereabouts and, as they would suspect, themselves figured in the three volumes.

I wish you were here with us. The luxuriance of the whole land, even in this season of drought, is wonderful; and the whole town seems full of gardens. I was hardly aware how great a feature this was in the town, for, comparatively speaking, these gardens, or rather courts, full of shrubbery, are of recent date; and such windows full of house-plants! It is truly a most pleasant old town, but oh, so quiet—stagnant almost! I love dearly a quiet house, a large, quiet garden, but then I must feel that beyond and about are men of stirring intellects, among whom important questions are felt as such; where people read, and care about what is doing and done in the world. Here, on the contrary, for miles and miles round is an Arcadia of woods, and green hills, and deep, picturesque valleys full of the landed gentry, who have grown for generations sleek and fat and quiet. There is no large, influential town to call forth their energies; their quietness is shown in the very tone of their voices. Everybody talks as if they were only half-awake, and they only read one newspaper for twenty miles round. You cannot think what energetic people we seem among them; one is absolutely compelled to lower the tone of one's intellectual interests amongst them. It would never do for us to live at Wood Leighton, beautiful as its country is.

Dear Miss Mitford, let me congratulate you on the success of "Ion." We were delighted to find that the *public* could appreciate its fine morality and its exquisite poetry. It certainly was more than we hoped for. What a disgraceful review was given of it in the *Athenæum*, the same number that treated "Wood Leighton" so scurvily, even after my good friend, Henry Chorley, had the week before expressed the most unqualified praise of it by letter, and led me to suppose it would win a handsome notice. The critique of "Ion" will do the tragedy much less harm than it must

do the paper in which it appeared. I have heard no one mention it—and many have mentioned it to us—who has not expressed the most perfect disgust of it. It is full of such bad taste, bad feeling, and ignorance, as well as absurdity. My husband was so indignant that he proposed writing to you immediately to express his indignation, but the winding-up of his affairs occupied him so completely from hour to hour, day after day, that he never could find the spare moment, and then, when the immediate vexation was passed, we resolved to write to you from this place. And now, dear, kind Miss Mitford, if you have read "Wood Leighton," let me know what you think of it *honestly*. I dare say *honestly* to you, because I am sure, though you *may* not like all, you will find something to like. You will not shear me down root and branch as the *Athenæum* did. Oh, it was a cruel criticism to thrust at one at the very fag-end —with a bad book tagged to one like a dog with a tin to his tail—was insulting indeed. I shall never forget the anguish of that day!

You cannot think how I enjoy this setting-out on our summer ramble. The children, dear little souls! are all safely and happily disposed of, so that we dismiss anxiety for them, and we are going over the land to enjoy ourselves, and no two persons under the sun can enjoy a summer's ramble more than we. You may fancy us, if you like, winding away over brown hills and mosses, by old ruins, over mountains, or by river-sides, wayfarers clad properly for our expedition—William with a knapsack on his back containing a change of linen, and such things of every-day use as civilized people cannot do without; and then you may fancy whether gypsies, or travelling potters, or chair-menders, were ever a pair of more authentic vagabonds than we. You will hear of a vagrant poet and his wife being brought up before some worthy Dogberry or other, and you may depend upon it it will be ourselves.

William sends his love to you, and pray make our united kind regards to your father.

I am my dear friend, yours most truly and affectionately,

M. Howitt.

LADY DACRE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Kimpton Vicarage, Thursday, June 30, 1836.

DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I am ashamed to present myself before you after my apparently ungrateful conduct; but I am not really ungrateful, I assure you, only a procrastinating shatterbrain, and everything most unpardonable at my age, so I have let time slip through my hands in a way I cannot account for without thanking you for your great kindness in sending me your own very beautiful opera and the wonderful production of your young friend. I wish the latter to be seen by better judges than I can be, who am no scholar, and it is thought as wonderful as you think it by those well qualified to pronounce on it. The learning she displays in the preface and the notes makes me stare, and gives me what the poor people call the "goose-skin"—a sort of vague sensation of awe to which ignorance is subject. Where is the marvellous young creature? Is it possible to get at her? And yet her sphere is so much above mine that I could but look at her as we did the other day at the eclipse, through smoked glass.

I have brought your whole parcel down here for my daughter's benefit, but when I go back to town the two books shall be faithfully deposited in Mr. Harness's hands. The opera I consider as my own, and shall, with a thousand thanks, keep it, and value it for its own sake, and your sake, and all *sorts of sakes*.

I mean soon to beg your acceptance of a little volume I am making of my translations from "Petrarch," but I will not insist on your reading it. Nobody reads translations who can read originals, and, as everybody reads Italian now, my work is a folly. The extreme difficulty of translating any poet, and especially Petrarch, has given my attempt a value in my own eyes, such as mothers feel for their ricketty child, who has given them more pains to rear than all their stout, chubby urchins. I am peeping out in print (*publicly*, not privately, as this is) in the shape of an interlude in one act in "The Keepsake," to oblige a friend—really! and also in a very trifling thing *compiled* for music the other day,

which I gave Lord Northampton for a charity. I say compiled, because I wove in songs I had written long ago. I hope your novel is advancing rapidly, that you may have your mind and hands free for your tragedy, in which I take a stronger interest. Every woman who can hold a pen writes novels now, and I think the Miss B.'s stories must bring the whole thing into disrepute. Don't quote me, for their father is Lord D.'s earliest and oldest ally. And now, dear Miss Mitford, I will encroach no longer on your precious time and great good-nature. Believe me, with true esteem and admiration, Yours truly,

B. DACRE.

The allusion at the commencement of this letter is to Miss Barrett.

CHAPTER XIV.

LETTERS FROM GEORGE DARLEY, HARRIET MARTINEAU, LADY DACRE, AND MISS MITFORD.

GEORGE DARLEY, the writer of the next letter, was the son of a Dublin alderman, who disinherited him because he devoted his time to writing poetry. He was thus compelled to support himself as best he could by literature, and laboring under the disadvantage of stammering—which he calls his *mask*—kept apart from society. Miss Mitford says that she hears he is "a very elegant and excellent person," and adds: "I should think him interesting, if his disappointment in not being acknowledged one of the great poets of the age had not produced the most intolerable fastidiousness and determination to disallow all merit in other writers." Darley was the author of "Sylvia; or, the May Queen," and other poems; of some plays; of contributions to the London magazines, and of letters on art to the *Athenæum*. Miss Barrett says that "he wrote a beautiful, tuneful pastoral once —'Sylvia; or, the May Queen'—but the thing wanted is passion, pathos, if not a *besides*." One of his songs, "I've been Roaming," was for years the rival of "Cherry Ripe."

GEORGE DARLEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

8 Beaumont Street, Oxford, Aug. 22 [1836?].

I cannot refrain, even at the risk of egotism, dear Miss Mitford, from expressing my pleasure and pride at your reception of my sorry little poetical tract, "Nepenthe." Praise in general is to me more painful than censure, compliments as formal as those of "the season" from visitors, the frozen admiration of friends, I shudder in the heart at all this; but one word of real enthusiasm such as yours is happiness, hope, and inspiration to me. Such as yours, I say—for when, together with being enthusiastic, praise is discriminative, it

becomes to me what a feather is to an eaglet; argue as we will, the spirit cannot soar without it. Mine has been, I confess, for a long time like one of Dante's sinners, floating and bickering about in the shape of a *fiery tongue* on the Slough of Despond. If it ever has risen, 'twas an *ignis fatuus* for a moment only. Seven long years did I live on a charitable saying of Coleridge's, that he sometimes liked to take up "Sylvia." What you say of her and "Nepenthe" will keep the pulse of hope (which is the life of the spirit) going, so that I shall not die inwardly before the death of the flesh. Many do, it is my firm belief, who, alas! have had still more ambition, and less success, than I. Murder is done every night upon genius by neglect and scorn. You may ask, could I not sustain myself on the strength of my own approbation? But it might be only my vanity, not my genius, that was strong. Pye and Cibber no doubt did so, conceited themselves writing for posterity, which, indeed, they were —for its *ridicule*. Milton and Wordsworth are not instances; they had from the first many admirers, though far from as many as they deserved. Have not I, too, had some, however few, approvers? Why, yes, but their chorus in my praise was as small as the voice of my conscience, and, like it, served for little else than to keep me uneasy. You see I am shriving myself to you, as if, like the Lady of Loretto, you were *made* of indulgences.

Do not, I know you will not, let me lose your esteem for thus avowing the "last infirmity." Milton, you remember, excuses it. I could defend it too. There are the stars as well as the bubbles of ambition; the one brightly solid, and exalted, and "age remaining;" the other glittering, short-lived inanities of our own low sphere. Should we not endeavor to approach towards the Most High in *all* his perfections, intelligence as well as goodness? Believe me, I am far above the vulgar desire for *popularity*. I have none of that heartburn. Indeed, who of any pride but must feel as high as scorn above public praise when we see on what objects it is lavished? Should I stand a hairbreadth more exalted in my own esteem by displacing for a day such or such a poetaster from his pedestal? But, candidly, judicious

praise is grateful to me as frankincense, partly, no doubt, for the love of fame, born with us like our other appetites, and greatly do I feel from its being the proof that my supposed path towards the Centre of Light is not an aberration. To seek and to keep such path should be every one's immortal object, because there alone is he the best coefficient in advancing himself and the human system. Here you have my intellectual creed; how it should have come into such a letter I cannot tell, but I have seldom the power to direct my mind, and must *only* follow it.

You are quite right about "Sylvia:" the grotesque parts offend grievously against good taste. I acknowledge the error, and deplore it. But the truth is, my mind was born among the rude old dramatists, and has imbibed some of their *ogre* milk, which gave more of its coarseness than strength to my efforts. And again, "Sylvia" was written in the gasping times of laborious scientific engagements. All its prose especially was what a boiling brain first threw up to the surface, mere scum, which I never intended to pass for cream. Your distinction as to this gratifies me much, not because it is ingenious—any critic can take an ingenious exception—but because it is just; beyond all, your preference for "Nepenthe," an unfinished sketch, to "Sylvia," a completed poem, gives me confidence in your judgment. It shows me you have, what is so difficult to meet with, a substantive, self-existent taste for *poetry itself*, when you can thus like storyless abstraction better than a tale of some (though little) human interest—not that the latter should be unappreciated where it occurs, but it *alone* is usually thought of.

This brings me to your advice about undertaking a subject of both natures, the imaginative and the real. Such indeed always is, always should be, the scope of a truly Catholic poet. But, alas! I fear myself but a poor sectarian. The double mind seems wanting in me; certainly the double experience, for I have none of mankind. My whole life has been an abstraction, such must be my works. I am perhaps, you know, laboring under a visitation much less poetic than that of Milton and Mæonides, but quite as effective, which has made me for life a separatist from society—

> "From the ways of cheerful men
> Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
> Presented with *each other page* a blank,
> And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

Indeed, were my knowledge of humanity less confused than it is, I apprehend myself to be still too much one-minded for the making a proper use of it. Do you not expect so from "Nepenthe?" Does it not speak a heat of brain mentally Bacchic? I feel a necessity for intoxication (don't be shocked, I am a mere tea-drinker) to write with any enthusiasm and spirit. I must think intensely or not at all. Now, if this be the case, if my mind be only occasional, intermittent, collapsive, which (unaffectedly impartial) I think it is, how should I conduct the *detail* of a story where poetic *furore* were altogether out of place? It is a great defect, I own, but my genius (as you call it) never enables me to sustain a subject; the subject must sustain *it*. I do so despise the pretension to omniscience and omnipotence now in vogue! This it is that makes us so feeble and shallow; will not the streams run deeper and stronger in one than many channels? But, besides, my health is an indifferent one; a tertian headache consumes more of my life than sleep does, and, worse than this, not only wasting it, but wearing it down. And I have to scribble every second day for means to prolong this detestable headachy life, to criticate and review, committing *literary fratricide*, which is an iron that enters into my soul, and doing what disgusts me, not only with that day, but the remaining one. All these things, and want of confidence still more than they, keep me a long letter-writer at your service. I have neither time nor inclination for aught else. Not but that I can show various first acts, introductory cantos, etc. — could *paper* hell with my good intentions—and have several folios only to be copied out of the parchment of my brain; the like interruptions and misgivings, however, cut them all down to such performances as "Nepenthe." Your praise, indeed, almost touches my lips with fire, and I could begin to utter the flame of song. After having viewed a subject sufficiently, I will dedicate it without fail *to you*, if you will permit, as the resuscita-

tor of "Sylvia," and the raiser of my own spirits on earth. But for you, both might as well have been at the bottom of the Dead Sea.

I write at this fearful length because it is the only way, dear Miss Mitford, in which I can ever have unpainful communion with any friend. My impediment is, as it were, a hideous mask upon my mind which not only disfigures, but nearly suffocates it. Yet I hope we shall meet, for even letters are half-unintelligible without the recollections of those who write them. Besides, I wish so much, and with a parent's fondness, to see the *foster-mother* of my "Sylvia" and "Nepenthe." Egotism! egotism! from first to last this letter is all about myself. Another hateful result of a solitary life, it makes me very selfish. Indeed, I doubt if it be not the mother of as many vices as Idleness, instead of so much *wisdom*, and what not, it is said to hatch. Swift, you know, says, "There are many wretches who retire to solitude only that they may be with the devil in private." Man is surely a most gregarious animal; we ought all to put our minds together as near as the other beasts do their noses. I say this to show you that my misanthropy is compelled, and that my mind has not *grown hairy* like that of many another anchorite, as well as his body. Your recommendation as to Mr. Chorley has been in part followed. I wrote to him just before leaving London, and sent him your "Nepenthe." But, as to making his acquaintance, I could as soon "eat a crocodile." However, even this I could do bit by bit, and a new acquaintance of the *man* kind I get down in the same way. He (Mr. Chorley, not the crocodile) wrote me a most kind and encouraging answer. I well believe him all as amiable and intellectual as you represent him; upon my return to town I shall certainly visit him in my *mask*. When I do not know how to subscribe myself with all the warmth yet respect I feel, it is my habit simply to say, Yours, GEORGE DARLEY.

MISS MARTINEAU *to* MISS MITFORD.

17 Pludyer Street, Westminster, Nov. 9, 1836.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I cannot now indulge in writing about Catherine Sedgwick, or any other of my dear Ameri-

can friends. This is the thirty-ninth letter I have written on the subject of the other half-sheet since yesterday morning, and I can scarcely hold the pen. We want you to sign this petition. Everybody is signing; and the case is so clear that I think you cannot hesitate. Mrs. Somerville, Miss Aikin, and I are signing. We expect Miss Edgeworth's in a post or two, and all the rest. When we meet, gentlemen and ladies, I will tell you the circumstances which have roused us at this time. We have very strong hopes of success, of obtaining a law this session, in which case I may have to wish you joy of a good prospect for your purse; and we may congratulate each other on (what we value far more than money) an essential service having been rendered to Science and Literature in both countries. I hope the Sedgwicks will get up petitions to support ours from the U. S. authors. Every true American is as anxious as we are to obtain this law.

No time is to be lost. The petition goes the end of next week. Please sign the printed part, and return it by post to Messrs. Saunders and Otley, 50 Conduit Street, Regent Street, London. Whenever you come to town, do let me have the pleasure of seeing you again. It is one of the pleasures I long for.

Ever yours most truly, HARRIET MARTINEAU.

This letter seems to refer to a movement in favor of international copyright. In June, 1837, Miss Mitford writes to Miss Jephson: "Have you read Harriet Martineau's 'America?' She is a great honor to her sex and country."

GEORGE DARLEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

27 Upper Eaton Street, Pimlico, Dec. 23, 1836.

I do not mean, dear Miss Mitford, to draw your eyes out with such an endless epistle as my last, written in perfect ignorance of your many anxious engagements, which were made known to me at the usual time of all desirable intelligence—a day too late. Yet I heard how much kind interest you had taken in my letter, so as almost to tempt me into writing you another *pandect*. However, by good luck

the many-tongued lady told me to-day you were steeped in tragedy to the very lips, and, now that you are supping full with horrors, it will be savage to accumulate much more upon them in the shape of such grim hieroglyphics as mine. The chief object of all these presents is to wish you all the success you merit. May it come in a Sunburst of Glory and a Shower of Gold! A play-house seems to me as melancholy as a catacomb, but I shall venture my anatomy there to witness your triumph. Laying an embargo on Mr. Forrest seems to have been most judicious; our native performers are salt that has lost its savor; him I have not seen, but am told that he has a new-world vigor about him very impressive. Again do I wish you a joyful rise from that region of damnation where so many spirits have sunk forever.

I have also to return you with thanks the extracts you sent me, and to tell you I have taken, like a good patient (though with wry face enough), the new acquaintance you prescribed for me. Nothing ever went so much against the stomach of my inclination. I would as soon be ordered mummy. For the reason you know, all strange bodies are distasteful to me. At this one my gorge rose like Hamlet's at the empty cranium. Habits, manners, tastes, opinions, all so opposite. We had often met with the same *congeniality* as a snake and a porcupine. However, I was determined to be obedient, so on the first occasion went up, shook cold hands, and felt all day after as if burnt in the palm for treason against true-heartedness. But, to drink the bitter cup of *obedience* to the dregs, I sent him my book as you ordered, and stayed away myself, as I was not quite sure you forbade. Will you believe, after all this, that we are now such excellent friends I scarce can think we were anything else? He is everything you spoke him, nothing I thought him—clear-headed, sound-hearted, only as much too modern of mind as I am too antiquated; so you see it was no false modesty when I told you my ignorance of the world. Will you accept the volume I send? It is my maiden publication (its predecessor was my *childish* one), so demands all your tenderness to its deficiencies. Do not, I

pray you, read the prose, in pity both to yourself and me; some of the verse, I am told, is better than I think it, and the latter too, let me beg in *parliamentary* phrase, "to be read this day six months."

Have you heard from the kind-hearted little Careys? Pray, if you write to them, remember me. I have been miserably ill for a long time, knocking at Death's door, but he had not the charity to take me in. Quite well now, so content to grovel on,

Ever yours, Miss Mitford, with the greatest esteem and regard, GEORGE DARLEY.

Miss Mitford says that these epistles of Darley's, written in a quaint, upright hand, "resembled the choicest parts of the choicest orations," and were "startling to receive and terrible to answer." She was not personally acquainted with him, but inserted one of his poems in Finden's "Tableaux." His works, though not without merit, were too enigmatical for the public of the day, and had no sale. He died in London, away from all his relations, an unsuccessful and disappointed man.

LADY DACRE *to* MISS MITFORD.

2 Chesterfield Street, Friday, July 7, 1837.

Of course, dear Miss Mitford, I cannot but feel highly gratified by the honor you mean to do me, and am aware that I must be the gainer by any mode of coupling my name with yours. The "noble Joanna" dahlia will be the pride of my garden, and if *we* ever *invent* a new flower, as you florists make nothing of doing, I think I must christen it "The nice little Mitford." "Nice," you know, in the language of the exclusives, means every perfection. The "poor old Dacre" you imply a promise of shall be treated with due respect when it arrives. It is droll enough that I had just been reading "The Lost Dahlia" when I received your letter so much in the same character.

I have intended to thank you for my *nice* book for these three or four days past, but wished to read it first, and have now so nearly done so that I can speak of it. The little

stories are all pretty, written with that ease, lightness, liveliness, neatness, and grace which characterize all your writings, and all your pictures are alive. Your landscape-painting is bright and true as the Miss Blakes' sketches made out of doors at *one sitting*, which are invaluable; and, if you have ever seen them, you will not be angry at your works being compared with those *young ladies'*, which at first might startle you. But (here comes my *but*, you see) I cannot allow you to go on with these slight sketches of Berkshire scenes and Berkshire doings. We must have something of more pith and substance soon from the author of "Rienzi," or we shall forget it was you who wrote that very powerful and beautiful and successful tragedy. This is a little *stop gap*, I know, and a charming one it is, but I must insist on your putting on the "sock" soon. The dedication to the excellent Harness is sweet; I particularly like it. I am very glad he prints his play. I am sure it will do him great credit. It is full of beauty; whether suited for the stage or not I have no guess.

Lady Beecher is a charming person, but she has lost so much of her personal beauty that she might not *charm* on the stage, as she once did; besides, I think the public taste is so corrupted now that the delicacy of her acting would not be felt. You must lay about you, and box their ears, to get their attention nowadays; but *you* can box their ears, as well as soothe and calm down every rougher feeling, as you do in those rambles in your pony-carriage after wild-flowers and cottage children in which I have just accompanied you.

And now, dear Miss Mitford, with many thanks for all your kindness to me, which is much more *real* than mine to you, Believe me, sincerely yours,

B. Dacre.

P.S.—I wish you were of our parties at Mr. Kemble's, and heard him read Shakespeare, and his daughter sing.

The following extract from a letter written by Miss Mitford to Miss Barrett is here printed, to show the state of

domestic discomfort in which Miss Mitford and her father were now living:

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS BARRETT.

Three Mile Cross, Dec. 15, 1837.

MY DEAR LOVE,—I have only a moment in which to thank you most heartily for your very comfortable bulletin, and to beg you to continue to send good news. We are in the agony of moving ourselves and our goods and chattels to a cottage still smaller than this, two doors off, whilst this house proper is repaired and painted—the two ends which have been taken down and built up again being to be roofed in on Saturday night, which drives the saws and hammers forward to the interior, and we find that in these closets (by courtesy called rooms) the workmen and we cannot co-exist, manage how we will. You may comprehend the capacity of our new mansion when I tell you that we are to pay £2 10*s.* for the quarter. Dash can't abide it; he sticks to me as if stitched to my gown-skirts.

Mrs. Hofland writes to me about a young American poet (Mr. Thackeray), who came to England partly to see Miss Edgeworth and myself. Miss E. was very kind to him, but what I shall do about him, in the present state of our house, heaven only knows! Did I tell you that I shall have a pretty up-stairs sitting-room, thirteen feet square, with a little ante-room, lined with books, both looking to the garden? I am only grieved at the expense, for though the building is done by our landlady, there must be incidental expenses—carpets, bells, stoves, etc., etc. However, it is less than moving, unless we had gone into Wales, to the house which a dear friend offered.

CHAPTER XV.

MISS BARRETT.—LETTERS FROM MISS BARRETT, LADY DACRE, THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, MRS. HOWITT, AND JOANNA BAILLIE.

MR. KENYON, when taking Miss Mitford in May, 1836, to see the giraffes and the diorama, called for Miss Barrett, "a hermitess in Gloucester Place," to whom he was distantly related. This lady's first introduction to the public as a poetess was through the insertion, in 1832, of one of her poems in the *New Monthly*, then edited by Bulwer, and through Miss Mitford's publishing some of her poems in Finden's "Tableaux." Miss Mitford then said, "The time will come when your verses will have a money value." Afterwards she writes: "My love and ambition for you seems like that of a mother for a son." "Our sweet Miss Barrett—to think of virtue and genius is to think of her." "She is so sweet, and gentle, and pretty, that one looks at her as if she were some bright flower." "The fairest and dearest of my contributors to Finden's 'Tableaux.' If she be spared to the world, you will see her passing all women, and most men, as a narrative and dramatic poet. In her modesty, sweetness, and affectionate warmth of heart, she is by far more wonderful than her writings." Her health was a constant source of anxiety to her friends. "She is, I fear, going rapidly to a better world. She is too sweet and gracious, as well as too wise and lovely, to be long spared." In reference to her writing Miss Mitford says: "When I first saw her she spoke too well, and her letters were rather too much like the very best books. Now that is gone; the fine thoughts come gushing and sparkling like water from a spring, but flow as naturally as water down a hillside, clear, bright, and sparkling in the sunshine."

MISS BARRETT *to* MISS MITFORD.

74 Gloucester Place, Monday [1837].

I cannot hope, my dearest Miss Mitford, that it may have seemed to you half as long as it has seemed to me since I wrote last to you, and yet it is a month since your delightful letter brought the *first* pleasure to me at a season of deep sadness. We had heard from the West Indies of the death of poor papa's only brother, of one in past times more than an uncle to me, and, notwithstanding all the comfort with which God in his mercy did soften this affliction, it could not but be felt, even as the affection which preceded it had been, and must ever be. Dearest Miss Mitford, the passing away of everything around us would break the hearts of many of us, if we did not know and feel that *we* are passing too. I long to hear of you, and should have said so before, and have thought day after day I will write to-morrow, and then again, not being very well, I have put it off to some less dull moment for your sake. The turning to spring is always trying, I believe, to affections such as mine, and my strength flags a good deal, and the cough very little; but Dr. Chambers speaks so encouragingly of the probable effect of the coming warm weather, that I take courage and his medicines at the same time, and, "to preserve the harmonies," and satisfy some curiosity, have been reading Garth's "Dispensary," a poem very worthy of its subject. Yes, and, besides, I have been going through heaps of poets ("oh, the profaned name!") laid up in Dr. Johnson's warehouses—Duke and Smith, and King and Sprat (never christened in Hippocrene), and Pomfret, with his choice, not mine, and his Pindaric odes, not Pindar's, in which he exclaims in a rapture—

> "Good Heaven would be extremely kind,
> Either to strike me dead, or strike me blind,"

when striking him *dumb* would be more to *my mind!* By the way, I am not at all sure of that not being as good a line as either of his.

Thank you for your most interesting remarks upon the drama; Victor Hugo's plays I never read, but will do so.

His poems seem to me not very striking, more bare of genius than such of his prose writings as I have happened to see. And little have I seen of the new school of French literature, and must see and know more of it. De Lamartine's "Pilgrimage" is the only traveller's book, except "Sindbad the Sailor" and "Robinson Crusoe," that ever pleased me much; and his poetry is holy and beautiful, though deficient, as it appears to me, in concentration of expression and grasp of thought. To speak generally, my abstract idea of a Frenchman is the antithesis of a poet, but pray do not, if the prayer does not come too late, think me quite a bigot. There is nothing, as you say, like the Greeks, *our* Greeks let them be for the future, and although I can scarcely consent to crowning Philoctetes over all, it would still be more difficult to take a word away from your just praise. The defect of that play is that it is founded upon physical suffering, and its glory is that from the physical suffering is deduced so much moral pathos and purifying energy. The "Œdipus" is wonderful; the sublime truth which pierces through it to your soul like lightning seems to me to be the humiliating effect of guilt, even when unconsciously incurred. The abasement, the self-abasement, of the proud, high-minded king before the mean, mediocre Creon, not because he is wretched, not because he is blind, but because he is criminal, appears to me a wonderful and most affecting conception. And there is Euripides, with his abandon to the pathetic, and Æschylus, who sheds tears like a strong man, and moves you to more because you know that his struggle is to restrain them.

But if the Greeks once begin to be talked of, they will be talked of too much. I should have told you, when I wrote last, that Mr. Kenyon lent me Mr. Harness's play, which abounds in gentle and tender touches, and not, I think, might I say so, in much concentration and dramatic *power*. As to its being a domestic tragedy, I do not object to it on that account, and really believe that I don't share your preference for imperial tragedies. Do not passion and suffering pervade Nature? Tragedies are everywhere, are they not? Or at least their elements are, or is this the pathos

of radicalism? My book is almost decided upon being, and thanks for your kind encouragement, dearest Miss Mitford, you, who are always kind. There is a principal poem, called the "Seraphim," which is rather a dramatic lyric than a lyrical drama, and as long, within twenty or thirty lines, as my translation, "The Prometheus of Æschylus," and in two parts. I can hardly hope that you will thoroughly like it, but know well that you will try to do so. Other poems, longer or shorter, will make up the volume, not a word of which is yet printed. Would not "by E. B. B." stand very well for a name? I have been reading the "Exile," from Marion Campbell, with much interest and delight; besides, she made me forget Dr. Chambers, and feel how near you were. A pleasant feeling to everybody, but how very pleasant to your affectionate and grateful E. B. BARRETT.

P.S.—My kind regards to Dr. Mitford, and papa's and my sister's to you. Our house in Wimpole Street is not yet finished, but we hope to see the beginning of April in it. You must not think I am very bad, only not very brisk, and really feeling more comfortable than I did a fortnight since.

LADY DACRE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Kimpton Vicarage, Thursday.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—As soon as I read yours, with enclosure for Miss Fox, I set off to little Holland House with them; we had a long talk, and she was everything we could wish. I now begin to open my heart to hopes that make it thump against my ribs very comfortably. I left town the day after I saw Miss Fox, and return thither on Saturday, when, if I find any possible means of playing the part of the fly on the wheel in the fable, I shall be full as happy and *vainglorious* as that same celebrated fly. I grieve to think of the disappointment you have undergone about "Otto" and your novel, and the unpleasant consequences in your domestic comfort; you have so many friends, and your works as well as yourself are so much esteemed, that at *romantic* moments I say, "Oh, yes, we shall succeed," and then comes my worldly knowledge and knocks over my castles in the air. I

wonder whether the Archbishop of Canterbury has any voice in these things? I could propitiate him. Surely it is no joke to have written the finest and most successful tragedy of the age; when I say "finest," I mean as an acting play, for experience has proved that. I am not so faithless to my glorious Joanna as to use that expression in an unqualified sense. You would not like me if I did. *Apropos* of that noble creature, I called on her a few days before I left town, and thought both herself and her sister much broken. I have a lovely letter from her to-day; but it is the letter of a lovely spirit about to depart to its native sphere. "In its weak virtues wrapped and best prepared," vide my own translation of a part of Petrarch's "Trionfo della Morte." And now, my dear Miss Mitford, I will release you, and hope to have something to say ere long better worth your reading.

Yours very sincerely, B. DACRE.

P.S.—I have sent my book to Miss Barrett, and have a sweet note from her. I shall try to *niggle* on with her; but I am too deaf and old, I fear, to scrape acquaintance with a young person.

DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Chatsworth, May 18, 1837.

DEAR MADAM,—Lord Melbourne's nephew and private secretary, Mr. Cowper, is a very great friend of mine, and I have written to him most fully about you, and he will not fail to show my letter, and to press the subject with Lord Melbourne. But do not let me make you sanguine. I never yet found a minister who would do anything the more for my asking.

How sorry I am to find that you have been annoyed by cares and illness! From the latter few seem to have escaped in this extraordinary winter and spring.

I have the honor to be, dear madam,

Your most sincere humble servant,

DEVONSHIRE.

The preceding letter refers to the movement for obtaining a literary pension for Miss Mitford. It was originally sug-

gested by Mr. Harness, and warmly forwarded by Lady Dacre, who wrote to Miss Fox on the subject, and thus secured Lord Holland's powerful influence. Accordingly, at the end of May, 1837, Lord Melbourne granted her £100 a year.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Esher, June 11, 1837.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Allow me to congratulate you on a subject which has given us unfeigned pleasure, and which we have found stated as fact in the *Athenæum* of yesterday—that you are now to a certain extent beyond the necessity of too far straining and taxing your mind; that the government has done itself the honor of benefiting you. I know no circumstance that could have raised the Whig ministry, of whom he has no exalted opinion, higher in my husband's estimation than this good act of theirs. Long may you live to enjoy it, and to produce through it the best works you will have written. . . .

Dear Miss Mitford, I cannot conceive how it is that you contrive to do anything in the country. People talk about the seclusion and the quiet of the country being so favorable to literary—successful literary labors. I think not. I sit here in pleasant, sunny rooms with flowers all round me, and birds singing as they sang in Paradise, and for the life of me I cannot write, though I have bound myself to finish a little volume by September, to be called "Birds and Flowers;" but the truth is, everything is so pleasant that my mind, instead of being concentrated to a task, is all afloat with the outward enjoyment of things. I must satiate myself with all the abundance of natural objects, before I can sit down to write about them. I remember at Nottingham, in the heart of the town, I used to think of such things, and create a vision of them in my own mind till I could do no other than write about them; here, instead, I go out and look at them. But it is a heavenly life, after all, if one had nothing to do but to enjoy it.

You will be glad to know that my husband is just bringing his "Rural Life" to a conclusion. I expect another fortnight's work will complete it. I am sure you will like it.

When you have leisure, let us hear from you. We want to know exactly what you are doing, and when the new volumes will be out.

Will you be so good as to send us an approved recipe for *pot-pourri*, for I am sure you must possess such a one, and Anna Mary is exactly the damsel for the execution of such works.

With kindest regards to your father both from William and myself, and love to you, I am, dear Miss Mitford,

Yours truly, M. H.

The application to which the following is a reply seems to have been made at the suggestion of Lady Dacre.

MISS BAILLIE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Hampstead, June 30, 1837.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—It is impossible that I should feel any request of yours at all intrusive, or otherwise than friendly and kind, and I truly regret that I must on the present occasion deny myself the pleasure of obeying you. Since the age of annuals began (a good many years now) I have always refused to contribute to them—though many of their most eminent editors requested me to do so, and to make my own terms—because I did not like that species of literature.

The circumstance you allude to regarding Lady Dacre and Mr. Harness gave me great satisfaction, though it was not from either the one or the other that I heard of it. Our minister will not suffer in the public opinion from *that* appropriation of the public money, but will gain credit by it, as he ought. We had the pleasure of seeing Lady Dacre yesterday, who kindly came to take leave of us for the season, and brought Lady Beecher (formerly Miss O'Neil) with her, who seems a well-informed, sensible woman, and brought former scenes to my recollection which I now look back upon with pleasure and regret. The last time we had met was in a summer-house in the neighborhood of Hampstead, when Sir Walter Scott, in one of his pleasanter humors, sat between us.

Lady Dacre told me that Mrs. Sullivan* is in the press again with a little book for promoting economy amongst the countrywomen of her neighborhood; and she could not do them a better service. It is to be privately printed and given away. What an active, public-spirited creature she is!—worthy of her maternal parentage.

I am glad Mrs. Baillie had the pleasure of seeing you when at Mortimer. It was one of the pleasures she looked forward to when she left home. She is indeed what you call her—a person of kind actions and gracious words. I am very proud that there should be a geranium in your garden bearing my name. I hope it will flourish there, and continue to be a proof of your kind partiality to

Your sincere and grateful friend,

J. BAILLIE.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Hadley, Aug. 2, 1837.

You, my dear friend, know too well what it is to have to finish a book, much to wonder at, or much to blame, my not attempting to write letters to any one till my volumes on Austria were finished. These, I am happy to say, are now off my hands. Mr. Bentley has got them, and I am free. Our expedition has been a very pleasant one, even although my dear Tom was carried away from us in the very midst of all our Vienna gayeties in order to take upon himself the office of under-master of King (Edward's?) school at Birmingham. This is an appointment he has been long wishing for, and we were, therefore, too reasonable to grumble *much*, but the losing him was very disagreeable. I heartily wish that you, with your rich, peculiar vein, would visit Austria, and give us some racy sketches of its *happy, happy, happy*—yea, thrice happy peasantry! I have no power to treat such a subject as you would do; but it is a very fine one. There is a sturdy independence, a gay light-heartedness, and thrifty industry in their natures which seems made up of England, France, and Scotland, taking exactly what is best in each.

* Lady Dacre's daughter.

Of the capital, of which we saw more than a tour generally shows, having passed eight months there, I can only say that it is the very gayest place I ever entered; but, agreeable as it is for a season, I should not like to pass every winter in such a careless round of dissipation. We really found it, as the housemaids say, "too much for our strengths," but those to the manner born take it very easily, and, with the restoration of a few weeks of summer interval, pass their whole lives without being for a single evening alone.

The first book I inquired for on my return was "Miss Mitford's novel," but I was told no novel had appeared. "Country Stories," however, are promised me, and these I expect to enjoy as I did their predecessors before them; for, though conscious of growing old apace, touches, true touches of nature reach my feelings as quickly as ever. I doubt, however, if I have so much fun in me as heretofore, for I do not laugh at "Boz" half so perseveringly as most others do, and, as I will not put this obtusity down to my want of capacity, I must attribute it to my age. You, my dear friend, who are, as I take it, some half-score of years or more my junior, can judge of these popular pleasantries more fairly; and I really wish you would tell me, if you go on number after number sharing the ecstasy that causes thirty thousand of the "Pickwick Papers" to be sold monthly.

My good friend Mr. Bentley, who, with his charming wife, was with me last week, tells me that Mr. Macready has taken Covent Garden, and that he (Bentley) is to be acting-manager. This gives hope, I think, of something like a regular drama again, and I hail it joyfully.

I hope your father is quite well. Pray remember me to him, and believe me, my dear Miss Mitford,

Very faithfully yours, F. TROLLOPE.

P.S.—Are you not rejoiced at our friend Marianne's good fortune? Your £100 ought to have been £300.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Esher, Oct. 23, 1837.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—With this comes a little book, which, little as it is, will, I hope, find favor in your eyes.

You will think I am a most devoted writer of juvenilities; but the truth is, one has no satisfaction in writing what publishers will not purchase; thus my poor ballads lie by, and I have busied myself through the latter months of the summer over this little book, and, after all, found it a very pleasant occupation.

We have been quite in an unsettled state through the summer from the intention we had of removing nearer town. We found ourselves here quite too distant from the advantages of London, and William perfectly impatient under the sense that, if he wanted to consult a book in the British Museum, he must drive sixteen miles, or torment himself by mounting a slow stage-coach. He therefore perambulated the entire neighborhood of London, and all around friends made a hue and cry after any "genteel residences," "villas," or "desirable cottage residences," as the house-agents' books have them — and endless were the places he visited, both likely and unlikely. After all, the conclusion he was compelled to come to was that here we must remain for the winter at least, for not one place did he find that in itself offered half the comforts and conveniences of our own home, spite of the envious fourteen miles. So here we are still, and, as the Southampton railroad will be opened between this and London in the spring, we shall have an opportunity of proving whether, as the learned in these matters tell us, it will offer us all the advantage of a short stage distance.

I hope you will not be tired of hearing of the "Rural Life of England," for I think my letters always tell you that it is in progress. You will, however, now see it soon, for every day brings proof-sheets; and Longmans are impatient for its publication in November. William has had Mr. Williams, the wood-engraver, who furnishes twelve cuts for each volume, down here twice to inoculate him with some sense of true country objects. He is a man of a curious mind, not apt in originating ideas, but quick and frequently very happy in working them out when they are suggested. He has, in his happiest designs, worked under William's eye and hand like an obedient child, and has produced some of the very best designs that have appeared in wood since the days of Bewick.

I hope your house alterations are all completed, and that you are enjoying the comfort of them.

With kind regards to your father, and best and most affectionate wishes for yourself,

I am, dear Miss Mitford, yours truly,

M. Howitt.

Miss Sedgwick *to* Miss Mitford.

New York, Feb. 9, 1838.

Mrs. Jameson leaves us to-morrow, to our deep and sorrowful regret. Seldom has any one taken from a foreign shore an affection nearer to that which Nature has made to flow with our blood. Such ties and influences as these do more to bind our countries together than commercial compacts and public treaties. This personal intercourse is constantly increasing, and as there is no barrier of language, as we are of "one baptism and one faith," we mingle like children of one family: as we are. I am sure, if you were to see Mrs. Jameson and Robert Macintosh lingering with our family circle till twelve o'clock over a cold partridge and a bottle of champagne, our tastes, sympathies, and associations homogeneous; if you were to hear the shouts of laughter at Macintosh's drollery, and his ineffable chuckle at our stories, you would hardly dream we were born three thousand miles apart. Would that your bright and kindly spirit were among us! I made some sad exclamations last evening in relation to Mrs. Jameson's departure, when my sister said, consolingly, "Oh, Miss Mitford will be here in the next packet." A startling sound it was to me, my dear friend, though, I fear, not a prophecy. But if you will not, or cannot come to see us; if the mountain cannot come to Mahomet, Mahomet, etc. If God continues my life and health, I will go to England in another year. My plan is to go with Kate, to be absent a year, to pass the summer in England, and nine months on the Continent. It is a pleasant dream, at any rate—a most pleasant confidence that I shall see *two friends* in that world of strangers. I have not the common curiosity to see authors as authors. We have the best of them in their books, and an hour or two in their

society (grudgingly given) would not suffice to give even a glimpse into their soul, those fountains that have sent forth such full and pleasant streams to us. Besides, I find in the lives of Scott, Mrs. Hemans, etc., etc., *even Charles Lamb*, that we Americans are regarded as bores. Nor have I any ambition to see your great people. Accustomed to a society where we meet *no superiors*, I could take no pleasure where I was admitted on sufferance. But with this pride, which you may think becomes an Indian as well as an American, I feel a respect and love for England that, I think, would make me throw myself on the ground and kiss the earth that would appear to me written all over with bright immortal names.

But, dear Miss Mitford, I am filling up my letter with myself when I should be thanking you for your last kind, but rather sad, letter. I was grieved that you should have had such vexations from my countryman; in return for all we have received from you, we should send you good, and not evil. I never have seen Forrest. I believe the reputation he acquired in England has not been sustained here. But I know little of theatrical affairs. Since the Kembles left us I have rarely seen the inside of a theatre. Strange to say, I have not yet seen Mrs. Butler; Kate and I are looking forward to the pleasure of passing next month with her. The resundering of her bonds to England was a shock to her, but her late letters indicate cheerfulness; and, as she has at present on hand the engrossing business of conjugal life, she has too much to do with the future to sigh for the past. Your friends, the Theodores, are truly and warmly your friends. My brother is passing a most philosophic winter in the country, and his son is shut up in his law-office in town. His wife is in a fair way to make up last winter's loss, inasmuch as the living can replace the dead. Alas! those places are never filled.

Kate says, "Give my best love to Miss Mitford, and tell her I shall certainly get you across the water next year." You know our young people have no modest notion of their go-ahead faculties. We are going to send you a Mr. Leasten, a painter, who has been among our Western tribes of

Indians, where no other white man has been, and painted with *fidelity* the Indians, their costumes, occupations, sports, religious observances, views of their villages, homes inside and out, numberless views of their rivers, prairies, etc., etc. He has made an immense collection of costumes, implements, weapons, etc. He is a man of perfect integrity, of the most delightful enthusiasm, and better acquainted than any other man with the history and domestic habits of the Indians. Have you ever heard of Osceola, the Seminole chief, to whom we have been so disgracefully treacherous, who has just died in the prison to which he was betrayed? His portrait alone, with Catlin's description of him, is worth a journey to London. Do not fail to see this pictured history of that passing race.

God bless you, dear Miss Mitford! My respectful remembrances and best wishes to your father, and

Believe me, ever truly yours,

C. M. Sedgwick.

P.S.—If it would be the slightest gratification to Mr. Talfourd, pray tell him that we are delighted here with his "Life of Charles Lamb," and feel—what we hardly thought possible—a deeper debt to the author of "Ion."

CHAPTER XVI.

LETTERS FROM MRS. JAMESON AND MISS BARRETT.—MR. KENYON. —POEM. — MRS. OPIE. — LETTERS FROM MRS. OPIE, MISS BARRETT, LADY DACRE, AND "BARRY CORNWALL."

THE only letter from Mrs. Jameson among Miss Mitford's papers is the following — evidently written soon after her first visit to Three Mile Cross. She seems to have been introduced by Miss Mitford to Miss Barrett. The latter writes: "I had heard that Mrs. Jameson was pedantic, and I found her as unassuming as a woman need be—both unassuming and natural. The tone of her conversation is rather analytical and critical than spontaneous and impulsive, and for this reason she appeared to me a less charming companion than our friend at Three Mile Cross, who 'wears her heart on her sleeve,' and shakes out its perfumes at every moment." On Miss Barrett's marriage Mrs. Jameson accompanied her and Mr. Browning on their wedding-tour in Italy.

MRS. JAMESON *to* MISS MITFORD.

Ealing, Saturday.

I must have seemed a thankless wretch, my dear Miss Mitford, but ever since my return home I have been very poorly, and miserable, and good for nothing. My visit to you was fraught with new ideas, and I brought away a most agreeable impression of "Our Village," as well as of my kind hostess. Will you not be tempted to pause some day on your way to town, and peep at me in my tiny cell?

Your Œnophera (or Œnephora, which is it?) is in the ground and flourishing apparently—a very pretty memorial of my visit.

I have written to Miss Barrett, expressing the gratitude I

felt, without volunteering any uncalled-for, uninvited criticism. Believe me, ever truly yours,

ANNA JAMESON.*

MISS BARRETT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Torquay, Friday, Nov. 13, 1838.

Whenever I forget to notice any kindness of yours, do believe, my beloved friend, that I have, notwithstanding, marked the date of it with a white stone, and also with a heart *not* of stone. . . .

You said "distribute the seeds as you please;" so, mindful of "those of my own household," I gave Sept and Occy† leave to extract a few very carefully for their garden, composed of divers flower-pots and green boxes a-gasping for sun and air from the leads behind our house, and giving the gardeners fair excuse for an occasional coveted colloquy with a great chief gardener in the Regent's Park. Yes, and out of a certain precious packet inscribed (as Arabel described it to me) *from Mr. Wordsworth*, I desired her to reserve some for my very own self, because, you see, if it should please God to permit my return to London, I mean ("pway don't waugh," as Ibbit says, when she has been saying something irresistibly ridiculous)—I mean to have a garden too—a whole flower-pot to myself—in the window of my particular sitting-room; and then it will be hard indeed if, while the flowers grow from those seeds, thoughts of you and the great poet may not grow from them besides.

Dearest, dearest Miss Mitford, pray never, *never* do tear up any old letter of yours for the sake of sending me a new one. Send old and new together. Postages upon *your* letters never can be thought of, and besides, my correspondents are not like yours, millions in the way of *number*. They in Wimpole Street knew my doxy upon such subjects too well

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* Mrs. Jameson was unfortunate in her family affairs, and nobly labored to support her mother and some other relations by her pen. Mrs. Butler (F. Kemble) describes her as having "red hair, a portly figure, and an expression spirituelle." L. E. L. said that she was "one of the few people she quite longed to meet again."

† Her brothers Septimus and Octavius.

to keep your letters back with the seeds. They did not *dare* to wait even a day for papa's coming, but sent it at once to me, double as it was, and *in* a letter of Arabel's own, making a triple; and those "discerners of spirits" at the post-office marked it (for all the thick paper) a *single letter*—immortal essence not weighing anything.

I can tell you a very little of dear Mr. Kenyon. I have heard indirectly from my sister, who had only *heard* of his return to London. His poem in "Finden" has both power and sweetness, and I have heard it preferred, though without an assent on my own part to such a preference, to his last more elaborate contribution. It is, however, very *stirring* in some parts, and liking it in MS.—in which state he hardly allowed me to see it—I like it still better now. Is not your "Aaron's Daughter" much admired? It *ought* to be. There is a half-playfulness and half-sentiment which touch my fancy just where it lies nearest to my heart, besides the practical *good-sense* (perhaps my sin may be to care something less for that) which Mr. Kenyon says "is always to be found in Miss Mitford's writings, in the very midst of their gracefulness." Yes, I have seen some kind opinions of my "Romaunt" in the *Chronicle* and elsewhere. *You* set the kind fashion by overpraising it; and indeed the stiff-necked critics must have caught fresh cold not to be able to bow their necks to receive a tunic from your hands.

May the "Pilgrim's Rest" as constructed be worthy of the "Pilgrim's Rest" as composed. There must be a "meeting of the waters" in their brightness for the accomplishment of that wish.

My beloved father has gone away; he was obliged to go two days ago, and took away with him, I fear, almost as saddened spirits as he left with me. The degree of amendment does not, of course, keep up with the haste of his anxieties. It is not that I am not better, but that he loves me too well; *there* was the cause of his grief in going; and it is not that I do not think myself better, but that I feel how dearly he loves me; *there* was the cause of my grief in seeing him go. One misses so the presence of such as dearly love us. His tears fell almost as fast as mine did when we parted, but he

is coming back soon—perhaps in a fortnight, so I will not think any more of *them*, but of *that*. I never told him of it, of course, but, when I was last so ill, I used to start out of fragments of dreams, broken from all parts of the universe, with the cry from my own lips, "Oh, papa, papa!" I could not trace it back to the dream behind, yet there it always was very curiously, and touchingly too, to my own heart, seeming scarcely *of* me, though it came *from* me, at once waking me with, and welcoming me to, the old straight humanities. Well! but I do trust I shall not be ill again in his absence, and that it may not last longer than a fortnight.

Have you seen the "Book of Beauty?" There is in it a little poem very sweet and touching, the production of Miss Farren, a young lady residing in this place. I do not yet know her personally, but she is a friend of Mr. Landor and Mr. Kenyon, and I have heard from the latter high estimation of her genius—it was the word used—and accomplishments both literary and musical. She has been very kind in sending me flowers and vegetables, but up to this day I have scarcely been fit for a stranger's visit. May God bless you! Ever dearest Miss Mitford's

E. B. B.

Mr. Kenyon is frequently mentioned in these pages; his wife was a kind friend to the Mitfords in their early pecuniary embarrassments. He wrote for magazines, and sent his book, "The Rhymed Plea," to Miss Mitford as an introduction. Several poems of his appeared in Lady Blessington's "Keepsakes" (1841–2–3), and one in Miss Mitford's annual ("Finden's") for 1838. But he was principally known as a brilliant conversationalist, a genial host, and patron of literary men. At his house, 39 Devonshire Place, he gave dinners not only sumptuous in themselves, but such as Addison would have approved, who said that he dined best who had the best company. Miss Mitford mentions her having met at his house Daniel Webster, Stanfield, Sergeant Goulbourn, Milman, Browning, Procter, Landor, and Rogers. He was a great friend of Wordsworth. He intro-

duced Miss Mitford to Mr. Fields and Daniel Webster, and also to Miss Barrett. Miss Mitford calls him "the most admired and courted man in town," and adds, "The dinner is made that has Kenyon as a guest."

The following Anacreontic by Mr. Kenyon is preserved among Miss Mitford's papers in her own handwriting. She says that he caught its sparkle from a glass of champagne, and the stanzas, commenced impromptu, were finished *verre en main.*

CHAMPAGNE ROSE.

Lilies on liquid roses floating,
So floats yon foam on pink champagne;
Would I could join that pleasant boating,
And prove the shining main,
Floating away on wine.

"Trust not," the graybeards say, "beware!"
Whose sea-shore is the goblet's brim,
And true it is it drowns old Care,
But what care we for him,
Floating away on wine.

And true it is they part in pain
Who sober cross the Stygian ferry,
But only make the Styx champagne,
And we shall cross right merry,
Floating away on wine.

Old Charon's self shall make him mellow,
And gayly row his bark from shore,
While we and every jovial fellow
Hear undisturbed the oar,
Dipping itself in wine.

Miss Barrett dedicated "Aurora Leigh" to Mr. Kenyon, and says that her "Dead Pan" was suggested by his paraphrase of Schiller's poem.

Miss Mitford had read Mrs. Opie's "Simple Tales" when she was twenty-three years of age, and in 1810 she mentions Miss Edgeworth, Miss Baillie, and Mrs. Opie as "three such women as have seldom adorned one age and country." Afterwards Mrs. Opie joined the Society of Friends, and Miss Mitford speaks of her as "that excellent and ridiculous person—" "Mrs. Opie is Quakerized all over, and calls

Mr. Haydon Friend Benjamin." But Miss Mitford says she mixed gay society with May meetings, and towards the end of her life she came twenty miles to see Miss Mitford, and was "one of the nicest and quietest old women possible. She is literally a *friend* to me."*

MRS. OPIE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Norwich, 11th mo., 28th, 1838.

What can my dear, kind, admirable friend have thought of my ungrateful delay in thanking her for a beautiful gift (which, by-the-bye, *malgré elle*, I do not intend to keep, except for a time, and for reasons and feelings *unconquerable*—more of that hereafter)!

But, culprit though I seem, I have some excuses to plead; first, absence from home; secondly, confinement to my room when at home, and then the lovely book was too precious and pretty to be turned over; and, thirdly, a still longer confinement, and literally to my sofa or bed, just as I had begun to open and read and admire.

Two days ago, however, I contrived to read the book through, and I found my tale appeared to more advantage than I expected. I marvel much at the admirable skill with which thou hast contrived to extract all that was necessary to conduct the story, and make strong, therefore (as such a thing could be made), what I had made weak. The talent of compression is a great one. The design I wrote to is the best save one in the collection, in my opinion; but I do wonder that such a superior writer as thyself, one who has so high a name, should condescend to write *to* a design *given*. (The other names are comparatively unknown.) Dear friend, it seems to me such a mistake to have tales in verse so unreasonably long, and in measure unfit for tales; and prose tales so *fatally* short—in a tale, story is almost everything, and no story can be really good that is not long enough to allow of the reader's being interested in the fate of the actors. The "Sœur de la Charité" has evidently

* She was the wife of the celebrated painter who was introduced to the world by "Peter Pindar."

been so curtailed that the catastrophe is by no means clear. It can only be understood by tale-writers that the Count was the radical turn of the matter, and, *therefore*, the girl ought not to marry him; but I read it more than once before I made it out. This was not Chorley's fault.

I understand and like thy "Buccaneer," and think there are sweet lines and real poetry in the first poem; but the story on once reading I could not understand. I may in the second reading. Indeed thy contributors *none* of them write with thy perspicuity, and, like Mungo in the farce, I say, "How can me like what me no understand?" But the book is a beautiful book, and, but for the true love and fealty I owe thee, I could not find fault, but I think the task *beneath* thee, and to thee it is waste of time.

I was in hopes that increase of income would have enabled thee to break from publishers' trammels, in which I can't bear to fancy thee; but thou art the best judge of thy own requirings and wishes, and I ask thy excuse humbly for having said what I have done. The head and expression of the frontispiece I think *exquisite*, and the face is, and even the look, like our young Queen. Was it meant to be so?

Thou art quite welcome to keep my *mauvais pas*, as long as it can be useful to thee; how rejoiced I should be to find it had been the means of good to thee in any way!

Many thanks for thy seeds; how proud and pleased I shall be to see them grow and flourish!

Oh yes! I do love geraniums, and should like to rival thee in them.

This is my second letter to thee. One I wrote some days ago, and burnt it, because I did not like it. *Then* I had read *only* the *three first* articles. They will all be read again. *Thine* I much like, *all* of them.

What an interesting, but queer, unsatisfactory book is "Charles Lamb's Life and Letters," by Sergeant Talfourd! How imperfect must that biography be, however well written, in which the writer is *forced*, by delicacy and consideration for the feelings of the *living*, to *conceal* the *awful marking* event which must have influenced the whole life and character of his hero! Thou art aware, probably, that the sister

was insane, and the frequent inmate of a madhouse, but she had lucid intervals, and then returned home. In one of these, in Charles Lamb's presence, she, while at dinner, stabbed her mother, and she died on the spot! This *fact* I had *from Coleridge* himself! Nor was there ever a more miserable, wretched pair than this poor brother and sister. I mean a more wretched pair of *innocent* sufferers. But in the life there is no *allusion* to these facts.

It is, however, evident that the poor dear man was not *right* in *his* mind. An affecting *vein* of madness went, I think, through all he wrote and said—but the letters are worth reading.

To-morrow I shall have leave from my surgeon to go down into my drawing-room. I have been in my room near a fortnight with rheumatic inflammation of the knee-joint, which I hurt when three years of age by a fall, and so, *that* being my weakest part (next to my head), cold flies thither, and settles there.

Farewell! I *hear a nay*, and expect callers.

Thy obliged and loving friend. Always greetings to thy papa. A. Opie.

The allusion at the commencement of the foregoing letter is to Mrs. Opie's contribution to "Finden's Tableaux." Miss Mitford succeeded Mrs. Hall as editor of that fashionable annual. The first volume under her auspices (1838) was dedicated to Lady Dacre, and contained contributions from Mary Howitt, Miss Barrett, and Mr. Kenyon. To the next volume, 1839, Mrs. Opie contributed.

Miss Barrett *to* Miss Mitford.

Monday, Dec. 3, 1838.

You dearest Miss Mitford,—To-day was the day fixed in my mind for writing to you, even if I had not heard from you yesterday. I thought I would wait one day more, and then write, and in the meantime went on building my Bastile in the air about your unusual silence. And do you know, dearest Miss Mitford, the truth came to me among my fancies. I fancied that some illness, and of one dearest

to you, kept you silent. It was such a relief to read the first page of your letter, and such a sad confirmation to turn to the second. Well, the evil has passed now. May the shadow of it be kept from your path for very long. While it is, other shadows will fall lightly, and may be trodden upon by a light and, some of them, by a very scorning foot.

My scorn—really indignation is too good a word for such a subject—unites itself to yours as closely as all my sympathies do to *you* in regard to every detail of your most interesting letter. I am most astonished. Can "high-toned" instruments be strung with such cracked wires? That *you* should pay, and *he* "*seem* to pay." Yes! and seem to be a poet besides!! Upon which there comes into my head a saying of Plato. I had thought before that it ought to come nowhere, albeit Plato's, "*Poets speak nobly, but understand not what they speak.*" I feel sorry. It is disappointing to be thrust aside from our estimation of any person. I have been accustomed to associate certain noblenesses with certain intellectualities. And although I never dared quite to use the words of your prophecy, "He will be a great poet," on account of the present want of what you call vividness, and I the power of conception, both of us referring to the same deficiency, the one to the effect, and the other to the cause, yet I did see in him a poet, and expect from him more than *this.*

And you think others capable of *this* besides! Don't let us say so till the experience comes. At any rate, dear Miss Mitford, I am unwilling to base the suspicion upon the ground of literary pursuits, small or great. Human nature is surely a better ground than poetical nature, and may it not be very true that the low opinion you have been led to form of a certain class of minds may have arisen from the circumstance, the accidental circumstance, of your seeing those minds in a closer relation to their vanities and interests than other minds, and also by naturally expecting something better from such minds, and also by necessarily, however unconsciously, comparing what you yourself think and do in similar situations, and that is always generously and nobly. I am afraid that human nature is corrupt every-

where. I hope it is not most so where corruption is most "without excuse."

But I am thinking, as I ought and must, more of you, my beloved friend, than of any of those people. I cling to the hope that although Mr. Tilt may be irritated into incivilities towards you—and abominable it is that he should—he is too wise a man to sacrifice his interests to his ill-humor, and lose your editorship of his annual just for the sake of annoying you. But, however it may be, as you think it worth while to put the question (and, while you put it, I do trust you were quite certain what the answer will be), *you may make whatever use of me you please, as long as I am alive, and able to write at all.* I hope if he, Mr. Tilt, ventured to dismiss *you*, he would pay me the compliment of forgetting my existence altogether, but, whichever way it is, "foul me fall" as a minstrel, if I serve liege ladye in "Finden's Tableaux" except your own self; therefore do not wrong my fealty. . . .

Of dear Mr. Kenyon I have heard more from you than from any one since his return. My sister had seen him, and papa was going to see him. I had heard nothing of his doings and enjoyments abroad from either. And so he won't have anything to say to our narrative poetry in Finden? But he is a heretic, therefore we won't mind. After all, I am *afraid* (since it displeases you) that what I myself delight in most, in narrative poetry, is NOT the *narrative.* Beaumont and Fletcher, strip them to their plots, make them your own Beaumont and Fletcher, and you take away their glory. Alfieri is more markedly a poet of *action* than any other poet I can think of, and how he makes you shiver! Mr. Wordsworth told me that he could read him only once.

Is there much "heresy" in all this? Forgive it, if there be.

Little thinks the bishop, whose right reverend autograph conveys my letter to you, that he is aiding and abetting the intercourse of such very fierce radicals. Indeed, the last time I thought of politics, I believe I was a republican, to say nothing of some perilous stuff of "sectarianism," which would freeze his ecclesiastical blood to hear of. My uncle and aunt know him very well, and that way came my frank.

Were omens busy around him, that he made such great haste and brevity about the name of *your village?* Do observe the direction.

MISS BARRETT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Torquay, Jan. 5, 1839.

YOU DEAREST MISS MITFORD,—I do thank you, my beloved friend, for your kindness in making me a partaker of your gladness. I wish all happiness to both of you—to you and dear Dr. Mitford—gratefully responding to your wishes to me on the occasion of this putting on of Dan Time's new doublet. They have come true already, for *papa has come.* May mine for you come true as truly—may God keep you both from January to January, and grant that you may have and feel no less occasion to look gladly on each other than we all have to look thankfully up to him! I *may* send my love and earnest wishes to Dr. Mitford—now may I not?

Papa says that Mr. Kenyon is out, and looking very well, but a letter from my sister tells me that, when she saw him last in Wimpole Street, his spirits did not appear to be as animated as usual, and I don't like hearing Mr. Harness's report of him. It must be that the life he leads will tell at last, and at least, on his *spirits.* Only the unexcitable by nature can be supposed to endure continual external occasions of excitement. As if there were not enough—too much that is exciting *from within.* For my own part, I can't understand the craving for excitement. Mine is for *repose.* My conversion into *quietism* might be attained without much preaching, and, indeed, all my favorite passages in the Holy Scriptures are those which express and promise peace, such as, "The Lord of peace himself give you peace always and by all means," "My peace I give you, not as the world giveth give I," and "He giveth his beloved sleep"—all such passages. They strike upon the disquieted earth with such a *foreignness* of heavenly music—surely the "variety," the *change,* is to be unexcited, to find a silence and a calm in the midst of thoughts and feelings given to be too turbulent.

My beloved friend, how very glad must be your gladness to watch, as I trust you are doing, the return of health to

your dear invalid—the dearer for the thought of what "might have been"—day after day, and to feel in the respect and attachment demonstrated so affectingly around you that there is a sympathy for your gladness as well as your fearing grief. But still I am anxious for you; I am anxious lest your past and present fatigues should prove presently too great for you, and that, when the exultation of joy has subsided, this proving may begin. Do be careful, and do not, at any time you have thirty-six letters to write, write a thirty-seventh to *me*. I am very thankful for the frequent accounts you have sent me, yet if they helped to tire you—oh, don't let me tire you ever, dearest Miss Mitford, pray do not.

And this suggests a termination to my letter.

I must, however, say how sorry and glad papa has been with you through the late changes. The patience and the silence *for your sake*, the love stronger than pain, they are beautiful to hear of, and very touching they must have been to *you*.

Poor L. E. L.! You will have been, as I was, startled and saddened to hear the sudden news. I had a *prophet in my thoughts* about her ever since she went away. It is a fatal climate, and the longest years do not seem to go to the lives of poetesses. Did you know her personally at all?*

Good-bye, dearest Miss Mitford. The cream shall be with Dr. Mitford's coffee as soon as possible.

Your ever attached,

ELIZABETH BARRETT.

P.S.—I am tolerably well just now, and all the better for the sight of papa. He arrived the day before yesterday, and I must remember him to you, although he is out walking, and cannot authorize me to intrude upon you in that way.

MRS. OPIE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Jan. 24, 1839.

MY DEAR AND EXCELLENT FRIEND,—I felt a strong impulse, that of affectionate sympathy and admiration, to write

* Miss Mitford says L. E. L. was "a fine creature thrown away."

to thee immediately on receipt of thy last letter, which touched many a responsive chord of filial suffering in my heart, but I forbore because I expected to write to thee soon, in order to acknowledge the receipt of the books. These books did not reach me till this morning, and I hasten to perform the long-desired duty; indeed, before I rose this morning, I was thinking much of thee, and wishing to write to thee, when lo! the welcome parcel appeared, and here I am pen in hand. Besides the interesting *ascent* which I devoured at and with my breakfast, I received a volume of poems, with a very polite note, from Mr. Kenyon. I glanced my eye over the book, and was so much pleased with what I saw that I resolved not to acknowledge the receipt, and *thank* him, till I had read it through, as I felt sure that I should be much gratified by the perusal, and could give sincere and heartfelt praise. I delight in that sweet boy's artless narration. It is unique in its manner, and I intend to lend it to the taker of *mauvais pas* and his wife. The bishop amused himself and me the other day at the palace with fancying himself introduced on the stage, and *Enter, the Bishop of Norwich.* However, of that there never was any fear, and thou mayest certainly use the little story if it suit thee.

Now to a graver subject, thy dear father's illness and danger. Merciful, dear friend, is always the hand that tries us —more graciously merciful that which supports us under trial, and then changes our pain into thankfulness and joy! Long may thy beloved parent be spared to thee, and I believe this prolongation of his life to be not only for his own sake, and on account of the love which thou bearest him, but because the longer he lives the greater opportunity is given to thee to shine as a pattern of filial piety, and to prove a bright example to other children. Filial obedience is not the *marking feature* of the present day, far from it, and I turn from many painful instances of filial *ingratitude* and want of *reverential duty* to contemplate with respectful affection the perfection of filial piety and reverential love in Mary Russell Mitford. I fear that sweet western flower, thy charming bard, will not recover, but while there is life there is hope. I am out, but not able to walk up and down stairs much with-

out my knees grumbling a little, but I have thankfully to acknowledge that my health is perfect. How kind it is in thy friends to be so bountiful to one! but it is for thy sake, and I thank thee as well as them. Oh, that poor L. E. L.! Didst thou know her? When will the *mystery* attending her death be cleared up? Emma Roberts writes me word that she did not destroy herself, but something or some one must have done it; she thinks she ruptured something in the brain, but how violent must the emotion have been that caused it! Dr. A. T. Thompson declares a chemist said they gave her no prussic acid. On the first of next month her faithful friend Blanchard's memoir is *coming out.* That is a difficult thing to *write* under such circumstances. I met L. E. L. at Mrs. Hall's, and I have always felt an anxious interest in her from the conviction she had strong feelings, not under the only safe control—that of religious principle. Farewell! Thy ever attached, obliged, and loving friend,

A. Opie.

The next letter was written by Lady Dacre shortly after the death of her daughter, Mrs. Sullivan, who was an accomplished person and an authoress.

Lady Dacre *to* Miss Mitford.

The Hoo, Feb. 13, 1839.

My dear Miss Mitford,—Although I am not yet equal to answering the many kind letters of friends who grieve with me, and Lord Dacre, with his usual immeasurable kindness, has hitherto taken all such things off my hands, I *will* thank you *myself* for your very gratifying few lines.

The testimony of such an one as you, both to her talents and private virtues (so eminent in both as you are), is worth having, and, in the midst of my desolation, was a soothing balm. My mother's pride glories in her still, and the very recollections which aggravate my loss alleviate it. I could almost wish so just and true and elegant a testimony to her literary merits could be seen and known by all who knew her. To think how soon every trace of so much merit will be effaced from all but our own minds is painful

to poor human vanity, though it ought not to be so when one knows where her much higher virtues are recorded, and are now receiving their reward.

My head is very much confused, so I will merely dwell on matters of fact, and tell you her deeply affected husband (who had nursed her night and day for many months with unremitting tenderness) was persuaded to come to us yesterday, and we have all the children here. We shall keep them a week, and then I shall go back with them to their melancholy home, Lord D. being obliged to go to London.

I never saw grief like my poor Frederick's, but it is tempered with such deep and heartfelt piety that I do not despair of seeing him one day resigned and cheerful. The dear, good, well-trained children will be a resource and comfort to him. As for me, dear Miss Mitford, I have the best of husbands still left me, whose evening of life I must not darken; and these children also to live for, if I *can*. How I am to do so I can scarcely imagine now, but as it can be but for a very few years, I must think of them, and not of myself. I possessed my treasure forty-two years. Ought I not to be all gratitude? and gratitude does preponderate greatly.

I am a brute for saying nothing of your affliction and its happy removal, but grief is very selfish; I cannot think any loss ever equalled ours, and yet how many blessings have we left!

Thank you, thank you for your letter, and all good attend you. With sincere esteem and regard,

Ever yours, B. DACRE.

Miss Mitford solicited poetical contributions for "Finden's Tableaux" from the well-known Mr. Procter — "Barry Cornwall."

B. W. PROCTER *to* MISS MITFORD.

5 Grove End Place, St. John's Wood, June 13, 1839.

MY DEAR MADAM,—If you will do me the favor to particularize the sort of poem you wish to have for your annual, I will try to find something that may suit it. What is to be

illustrated? What is the subject or subjects (supposing one may choose out of several)? And what length is the poem to run? If you have no fixed subjects, what is the general tenor to be—*i. e.*, is it to consist of romance, or what else?

Should I be able to find anything in the shape of rhyme that, with a little extension or alteration, will do, it shall be at your service; but I am afraid of promising anything, unless I have some raw material by me. I am so out of the habit of scribbling anything but law that rhyme is now more difficult than reason to me. And I have many professional engagements on hand that *must* be attended to, and which will absorb all my hours for some time to come.

But you will, I am sure, be satisfied that, if I *say* I cannot do anything, I am really unable to do anything. On the other hand, if I *can*, you shall have it without further apology.

I have just met (at Mr. Kenyon's) Daniel Webster, the famous American orator. He has a broad, strongly marked brow, with a dark, deep-set eye that looks full of intelligence and vigor. I do not remember ever to have encountered a man whose looks struck me so much. He is a little cold in his manner (like most of his countrymen in general), but it is not offensive. It is rather a grave self-possession than superciliousness. I did not *hear* much, but with the thermometer at 99° in the shade one cannot take any nice observations.

I hope that your geraniums flourish, and that you are meditating something for the press (I mean after you have completed your annual). My wife begs to be kindly remembered to you.

Believe me to be, dear madam, yours very faithfully,

B. W. Procter.

Miss Mitford writes: "Sweet, gentle 'Barry Cornwall' mixed with the choicest spirits of London society." She says that Procter assumed this pseudonym fearing lest his poetical ventures might injure him in his solicitor's business.

CHAPTER XVII.

MISS SEDGWICK'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.—LETTERS FROM MISS SEDGWICK, MRS. HOWITT, MRS. HOFLAND, AND MRS. OPIE.

MISS SEDGWICK'S acquaintance with Miss Mitford, which had been commenced and so long carried on by correspondence, was about a year before this time cemented by a visit of the American authoress's brother and nephew, who passed ten days with the Mitfords. In 1839 Miss Sedgwick landed in Portsmouth, and immediately, before going to London, went to call on Miss Mitford at Three Mile Cross. Miss Mitford found her "a very nice person indeed." Miss Sedgwick gives the following account of her visit to Miss Mitford:

June 13, 1839.—I had written to Miss Mitford my intention of passing the evening with her, and as we approached her residence, which is in a small village near Reading, I began to feel a little tremulous about meeting my "unknown friend." Captain Hall had made us all merry with anticipating the usual *dénouement* of a mere epistolary acquaintance. Our coachman (who, after telling him that we were Americans, had complimented us on speaking English, and "very good English too") professed an acquaintance of some twenty years' standing with Miss M., and assured us that she was one of the "dearest women in England," and the doctor (her father) an "'earty old boy."* And when he reined his horses up at her door, and she appeared to receive us, he said, "Now you would not take that little body there for the great author, would you?" and certainly we should have taken her for nothing more than a kindly gentlewoman, who had never gone beyond the narrow sphere

* Miss Mitford resented this description of her father, and in the next edition Miss Sedgwick substituted "a fine old gentleman."

of the most refined social life. My foolish misgivings were forgotten in her cordial welcome. Miss M. is truly a "little body," and dressed a little quaintly, and as unlike as possible to the faces we have seen of her in the magazines, which all have a broad humor bordering on coarseness. She has a pale gray, soul-lit eye, and hair as white as snow; a wintry sign that has come prematurely upon her, as like signs come upon us, while the year is yet fresh and undecayed. Her voice has a sweet, low tone, and her manner a natural frankness and affectionateness that we have been so long familiar with in their other modes of manifestation that it would have been indeed a disappointment not to have found them.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

London, July 7, 1839.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—What a pleasure it is now to begin my note to the personification of all those qualities I have loved in my unknown friend — to have your image realized.

The evening we had the happiness to pass with you was one of the most interesting of my life, and because I have had so much to say about it, I have as yet said nothing! But you know what London is, and how it devours—and, besides present duties, I have an insatiable home correspondence. This is to justify myself—not to justify you. My dear Miss Mitford, you are so like what I expected, and yet so different, that there is a strange blending of the familiar with the novel. I am sure that we should have many points of sympathy that are not general; for example, I do so hate being considered as an author. My being so was so perfectly accidental, so contrary to my tastes and habits. Whenever a person to whom I am introduced begins with an initiatory sentence about my books, I feel as if cold water were thrown in my face. I have not yet got familiar with my name in print; it always seems to me as if that Miss Sedgwick was quite an individual independent of myself. But how has the wish to prove my resemblance to you led me into this flood of egotism?

Pray excuse my retaining Willis's book so long. It was

merely because I had not time to write even a note to you. I send with it a piece of utility, which is entirely unadapted to you, but you may find some one among your humble friends to whom it may be acceptable.

I wish I could tell you how much I have been delighted with your friends Harness and Kenyon—so alike in essentials, so strongly individualized—Harness has the kindliness of Uncle Toby, and Kenyon the benevolence of Pickwick,* and those qualities showing off well in polished and intellectual life. I have much to say to you of London. It has afforded me infinite amusement. I am ashamed to send you this, but you will forgive it. Present my respects to your dear father, my homage to the geraniums, and pray keep my love to yourself. Yours truly, C. SEDGWICK.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

Esher, Jan. 8, 1840.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I was quite in hopes that before I wrote to you I should have had the pleasure of making acquaintance with your warm-hearted friend, Mrs. Price, to whom, through you, we are indebted for a charming letter and most opportune present of German books. I do not know when anything gave me more pleasure than the coming in of those books. It really was like a little bit of enchantment, for they came at the very moment when we were saying, "We have read all our books; what shall we do for something new and easy to read?" We have to thank you also for putting us in the way of another acquaintance, which to my feeling promises very agreeably—I mean Mr. Martin. We have a perfect vision of what he is like, for his letters are very characteristic. He is, besides, one of those fortunate mortals—we all know a few such—who, place them where you will under the most unpromising circumstances, and among people who seem made of the commonest clay,

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* Miss Mitford alludes to this observation in a letter to Mr. Harness: "Certainly the Pickwick countenance as given in the prints is like our dear friend; but he is, with all his kindness, a great deal too shrewd and clever for that very benevolent and rather simple personage."

yet will they make an Eden for themselves, and bring out, by a sort of alchemy of their own, the pure gold of human nature. How else could Mr. Martin have found what he did in the out-of-the-world regions about Heanor, old Acre Lane, and Langley Mill, high-minded men and accomplished women? I am sure we shall like Mr. Martin, although the immediate object of his mission, the editing the life of his *ancient friend, Mr. Frost,* we cannot undertake in our own person, for this simple reason, that we are so full of literary engagements for the next two or three years as to render it impossible. Nevertheless, William will do his best to put Mr. Martin in a way of having it done, by endeavors to suggest some other person. It is rather curious that William has been solicited by a publisher to write "The History of Reform," a noble work—and he has already about a hundred volumes in the house sent to him for that purpose; but it must stand over, at least till our return from Germany, although it is a work greatly to his taste. I expect, however, before we leave England, he will have to spend about two months in Northumberland and Durham, which is to form the subject of the second volume of the "Remarkable Places."

I have just got your "Finden's Tableaux." I have not yet had time to read your articles, nor even Miss Barrett's, but I have looked it through. Is it not a glorious book? We are so delighted with poor Mr. Brown's designs. We know something of him, and feel much interested for him. Poor man! he is doomed, we fear, to die of consumption, but his imagination is so pure, so poetical—is it not? We want to employ him to illustrate my ballad poetry, but I fear his health. I think, however, if he were able to undertake it, he would produce something very good and striking, for his genius has a bent that way.

God bless you, dear Miss Mitford, and send you health and all prosperity. We all send our love.

Yours affectionately, MARY HOWITT.

MRS. HOFLAND *to* MISS MITFORD.

Broadway, Hammersmith [1840].

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It strikes me that you and I are much too genteel to use this villanous cheap postage, therefore we cannot correspond as we want—in truth, not a day goes over my head without my saying that I am going to write to dear Miss Mitford, and that I want to know exactly what she is doing; still it does not get done—there are so many letters to answer which must be done. What can one do, when everything says you grow old?

Yesterday, for the first time, I saw your beautiful book at Mr. Hoole's, and was delighted to see half the things were your own. I am going there next week, and shall read them all; one cannot borrow one of those books to be easy about them. Miss Brabazon told me some time since that the doctor was suffering from a bad arm, but it was getting better; but I have once more been in London a few days, and had the very great pleasure of seeing Mr. Harness and his sweet sister, who is quite as young as she was a dozen years since, and actually prettier. There was also a lovely niece, as like her uncle thirty years ago as possible. What was best of all, they seemed glad to see me, and that is a great treat to an old woman, who so seldom peeps into the world that she fears to meet its face, which might reproach her for living so long.

My master enjoys everything in Italy with wonderful zest, and though he says he has undertaken too much for his time of life, and is very old-gentlemanish, he has done more work than ever he did before, since he got over a sense of depression arising from the extreme beauty of the scenes and his own inadequacy to represent them. When he left Naples, he had made thirty finished sketches. With Rome he is quite charmed—"it is so quiet and clean"—but does not sketch there. Since he went, his publisher of the "Fishing Book" was bankrupt, but the business is continued, and I hope he will not lose much; but it was a great shock to me at first.

Mr. Harness says you are going to publish your own let-

ters, which will, I am certain, be a very charming volume (to be interspersed by those of Sir William Elford). I have many beautiful letters of yours, which might be worked in with others, if you ran short, and addressed to any one. They were written from 1817–1824, when you had more leisure for scribbling freely than you have had since, and were not trammelled by the business of literature. You will see how you go on. I esteem your beautiful letters far too much to waste them, even on you; so I shall not send any of them till you say they will be *useful.* I mention it because you may not recollect you wrote such clever letters to so humble a friend as I.

My own peculiar and out-of-the-way disappointments as to an historical novel I cannot tell you, for my wounds are too green. I meant it for my last—it will be last, and best, but never seen.

Mr. and Mrs. Hall, they tell me, are gone to Ireland to make a book between them to suit Creswick's plates. It is seldom that I hear of any literary news, yet I have one very nice neighbor, who sends me books, but can seldom call, being editor of the *Naval and Military Gazette*—and there are some pleasant families, who are kind and call on me; but I do not like living alone at all. I have no desire for what is called company—in fact I dislike it, but I must have somebody to speak to, otherwise I sit and think on all I have loved and lost, and the sorrows of my whole life walk in procession before me. A single person, not rich enough to receive friends, should board in a family.

How dreadfully gardens were cut up last winter! How does yours fare? The season has been admirable. I never knew such a fine April. Will you ever come to London, I wonder; but, if you do, the great folks will devour you, and I shall not get a morsel. There is only one Reading coach that goes through Hammersmith. What a change railways have made! Only two mails go through, and there were nine two years ago. People actually go to Sheffield in eight hours. A friend the other day lunched at one in his own house, and took tea in town at half-past ten, quite settled.

Now do, my dear friend, tell me how you are, for I do want to know sadly, and all about you, and your dear father, to whom offer my best regards, and believe me most truly,

Your affectionate friend, B. HOFLAND.

MRS. OPIE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Norwich, Aug. 7, 1840.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—On my return from London three days ago I found thy kind letter, and was truly gratified to receive such a proof of thy confidence not only in my *will*, but my *capability* of serving thee; and had I followed the impulse of my *heart*, disregarding the monitions of my judgment and my sense of honor, I should have written directly to say I would, to *oblige thee* (and on no *other condition*), undertake the task so flatteringly assigned me. But I forbear to give way to my *impulses*, and now, after much serious consideration, I am forced to refuse thy request. Now, to tell my reasons, I am in the first place bound in a degree not to *invent* a story, because when I became a Friend it was required of me not to do so. The tale I sent to Tait was *all* invention, but that was written *before* I joined the Society, and was read, and its publication sanctioned in an *annual* which never appeared, and the person for whom it was written became a bankrupt, and returned it to me. He gave me twenty-five guineas for it. Having it by me, and knowing it to have been approved by a preacher in our Society, I ventured to sell it to Tait. But perhaps I could have found something, half true and half false, which might have suited the *drawing;* therefore *that* Quaker scruple is not my reason for refusing.

This is it. I have *faithfully promised* to give my whole mind to drawing up, if *I am able*, a sort of *popular précis* of the glorious antislavery proceedings and sittings in the Antislavery Convention. "The World's Convocation," recently held at "Freemasons' Tavern," where I was daily a delighted auditor; and some of my own Society, distinguished members of that convention, entreated me to *try at least* to draw up something for the committee to publish. I do not believe myself sufficiently *able* in mind and talent to do it,

but I feel *bound to try;* and I have also a promise, unfulfilled as yet, to Tait to give him "Recollections" of Lafayette or of Cuvier. The *latter* I may defer, the *former* I *cannot;* and this *very* day I *re-read* Harriet Martineau's masterly "Martyr Age of America," to stimulate me to begin my task. This is the truth, and, as I know thee to be *a just person*, I feel that thou wilt see that I am only acting a *just* part in declining to accede to thy wishes.

It is almost post-time—I must conclude. I hope and trust thy dear father will suffer no more from his accident, and that you will have a pleasant autumn together. Thine in love and haste, A. OPIE.

Pray write.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LETTERS FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS BARRETT.—DESCRIPTION OF SILCHESTER.—DECLINE OF DR. MITFORD.—LETTERS FROM MRS. TROLLOPE AND MISS SEDGWICK.

THE following letters to Miss Barrett were written in 1842, the year in which Dr. Mitford died, and it has been thought desirable to print them here, as they have not been previously published, and afford good specimens of Miss Mitford's writing, as well as proofs of her devotion to her father during his last illness.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS BARRETT.

Three Mile Cross, May 5, 1842.

Mr. Kenyon's kind letter, my beloved love, arrived just soon enough to be answered—that is to say, to have a very long postscript appended to a very brief letter. Some friends of his have come to Silchester, and I shall go to see them to-morrow or next day. Oh, that you could be of the party! Well, in spite of the manner in which the winds have affected *that dear heart*,* I will hope that the hour may come when we shall see that lovely scene together. The poem on Silchester first made Mr. Kenyon and me friends, and that friendship was the remote cause of one to me still more precious—there is one reason for loving Silchester. But the scene is itself so beautiful! Fancy a hundred acres of the highest land in the south of England, the crown of a ridge of hills, mostly covered with the richest woodland, enclosed by a wall some twenty feet high, and nearly twenty feet thick, surmounted by huge pollards, high timber-trees, hedgerow shrubs (such, for instance, as fine old thorns, maple-

* These words are inserted conjecturally, the writing being somewhat indistinct.

bushes, etc.), with enormous masses of ivy, and wild service-trees, and long, pendent shoots of the brier-rose hanging down the old gray, cliff-like walls. Everywhere the ground at the foot of these walls sinks down into a narrow fosse at the depth of some hundred feet, rising again on the opposite side—some part of this outer ditch being rich meadow-land—other portions in the most beautiful coppice—joining again to the other copses—on the most beautiful ascents and declivities. Nothing was ever so exquisitely mantled about. Just at one of the gates of the old city, a huge crag clothed with ivy and crowned with magnificent timber-trees, stands the pretty country church; adjoining to that an old rustic farm-house; and at a little distance, in a magnificent grove of oak-trees, the amphitheatre, with its five rows of seats still to be traced—huge elms growing on the top and sides, and the large oval space in the bottom perfectly clear, a fine level arena of smooth and verdant turf. On one side of the amphitheatre is a piece of water, dark as a mirror; another deep pool reflects the hoary walls and some noble oak-trees; and on the opposite side of the city the parsonage, a beautiful house, very large for a pastoral mansion, with its pretty grounds, sweeps away into the woodland scenery of the south side of the walls. A short avenue leads to the fine, open, breezy common, golden with furze and broom, and from that commodious upland you look down upon the hundreds, ay, thousands, of acres of the most wild and exquisite sylvan scenery. Pamber Forest is spread beneath your feet; on one side the dark fir-plantations of Mortimer Common rise over a clear little lake with its decoy and its millions of wild-fowl—on the other, High Clere; the Beacon hills stretch away over the wild district of North Hampshire, where Mr. Chute's curious old place, The Vine (*vide* Horace Walpole), and the still more remarkable moated grange of Bear, carry back the eye and the fancy to the days of Clarissa, and of manners and scenery more primitive still. Oh, how I should love to stand with you upon Silchester Common! Its floral beauty I have endeavored to describe to you in my scrawl of last night—but the purity of the air, the fragrance of the budding woods, the enormous

fir-plantations, the wide expanse of richly scented, blossomed gorse, the acres of wild hyacinth and of lilies of the valley, defy all description. It must be felt. Oh that we were there together! I so love Silchester—always loved it. Always a drive to Silchester, or ramble through the woods, was to me joy and delight, health, freedom, and happiness; and since I have learned to think of it as a link in the chain of our friendship, I have loved it more and more. Surely a wish so ardent will one day realize itself. We shall stand together in that lily coppice, where terrace hangs over terrace crossed with its thousand trees, carpeted with its myriad flowers, vocal with the blackbird and the nightingale. Surely, surely, we shall some day go together to Silchester. You will think, my dearest, that I rave. But so well do all here know my passion for the place that, when very ill, my poor father years ago has often said, "We will go to-morrow to Silchester," and that was a never-failing specific. Even now *he* goes there. It is a strange feeling that—for he himself has not my enthusiasm for the spots, and *now* thinks, persuades himself, that it tires me; but it is a sort of imitation. He recollects my love for it, my persuasion of the good that it did always effect upon me (the benefit resulting partly from the delicious purity of the air, partly from the love), and now, without the love, he, from pure imitation, persuades himself that what used to be good for me will be good for him: so (although too far, as I fairly tell him) he goes.

You are far too good, my most dearest, in what you say of my poor letters. They come from my heart, and therefore go to yours—but that is all their merit—merit to us only—to the lover and the loved. Was there enough of the honey to taste? It seemed so light that it might be all but empty. From two other "tastes" of the same "honoring gift" (and who should have it, if not you?) it seemed to me strongly myrtle-flavored—tasting exactly like the scent of a bruised myrtle-leaf. The most delicious honey that I ever met with came from the orange groves of Sicily, and had the exact flavor of that delicious perfume. Would the myrtle taste keep away the flies, or was it an exaggeration?

Upon reading over my wretched scrawl I see that, with

my usual curious infelicity, I have contrived to make it appear that the one hundred acres within the walls of Silchester are partly woodland—whereas *they* are clear, open fields. It is the hills and declivities around that seem hewn out of some vast forest. One sweet village close by (Mortimer West End) goes straggling down one steep hill and up another—partly coppice, partly meadow, partly field—a clear bubbling brook crossing the road at the bottom, and the road itself winding and twisting, so as to give it at every step a fresh landscape. Oh, the beautiful cottages of that West End! In many of them piles of long, straight poles and neatly arranged staves are leaning against the ends of the dwellings, giving token of the sylvan trade of the inhabitants! But for the distance from Mr. May, I should long since have coaxed my father into migrating as far towards Silchester as Mortimer End West. Only how K—— would dispense with the streets and shops of Reading I can't tell. She is most thankful for your kind and condescending notice of her sister, who lives as lady's maid with the Misses Pepys—Sir William Pepys' sisters—in Bryanston Square. I have a good opinion of their sense, for I find that they leave their town house in May (not letting it, but shutting it up), and resort to their country-seat to stay the fine season in the pretty scenery of Kent.

Did you find the leaf of the *humea elegans* between two leaves of Sir William's book? Did you like the scent? It is the fashion, and the plant came to me from Strathfieldsaye—the gardener there and I having a traffic in flowers. In days of yore I used to get books from the Strathfieldsaye library—Lord Rivers and my father being great friends and fellow-coursers. He was a man of taste, and from him I borrowed more volumes than I can recollect of French memoirs. They are delightfully amusing. I must go over them again when I have time, not from Strathfieldsaye—I doubt if the great duke's library be half as well furnished as was that of his predecessor, who had a noble collection of the best books—but from Sir Henry Russell, whose wife, a Frenchwoman, has caused her accomplished husband to add the literature of her native country to his own.

Heaven bless you! I am tired to death, and I presume that my sleepy letter bears sufficient marks of my condition —thrice happy if it may come in aid of opium, and bring sleep to your eyelids.

* * * * *

Once again heaven bless you, my most dearest! My father sends his kindest love.

Your faithful, M. R. MITFORD.

P.S.—How is your Flushie? Mine becomes every day more and more beautiful, and more and more endearing. His little daughter Rose is the very moral of him, and another daughter (a puppy of four months old, your Flushie's half-sister) is so much admired in Reading that she has already been stolen four times—a tribute to her merit which might be dispensed with—and her master having upon every occasion offered ten pounds reward, it seems likely enough that she will be stolen four times more. They are a beautiful race, and that is the truth of it.

The commencement of the next, also written from Three Mile Cross, is wanting.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS BARRETT.

. . . At last it occurred to me that the best for him would be to move the large articles of furniture with which our entrance-hall is filled, and restore the little parlor to its office of a sitting-room for him, put up my dear father's bed in the hall, condemning both the front-door and the one from the staircase, leaving none but that from the parlor and that from the kitchen, and going in and out myself from our back-door. This has been accomplished, thank God, without disturbing him. A bed is put up in the kitchen for his nurse. I shall sit up when needful in the parlor, and the large fires of the parlor and kitchen, and the double doors and double carpets with which we have lined the hall, make that a most warm and comfortable bedroom. Heaven be praised! Now he can have his two favorite arm-chairs in the little parlor, and be moved from one to the other as

he gets cramped, and Flush and I can sit at his feet. Poor Flush! how he has been watching the operations, and how thoroughly he approves them! I wish you could see him. Mr. May will be delighted to find that, besides a comfortable bedroom, we have got a nice little parlor for him—change is so essential. Now he can get up as early as he likes, and stay up as long; and, instead of the stove which Mr. May suggested for the hall, he will have the nice open grate which he likes so well, and his favorite round table, and his own two chairs.

I cannot tell you the relief that this is to us all. I have been so worried, besides the anxiety and the grief and the fatigue, that this one relief is an unspeakable blessing. It seemed so hard that the discomfort of moving up and down our cottage stairs should be added to such feebleness. Now he will at least have no outward want of room or appliances; and as to visitors being forced to come in at the back-door, and pass through the kitchen—why, friends will not mind it, and acquaintances I should not dream of letting in.

I do not apologize for sending you this detail, my beloved friend: you will sympathize with me, I know, and this lodging my father has been a most serious matter to me. Ever since his dear master has been so ill, poor little Flush has either slept at his door—across the door—or in my room, which he never used to do. It seems as if he could not bear to leave us, and there is a look of pity in his sweet countenance, a fellow-feeling which I cannot describe. The gentleness with which he kisses his master's hand now is quite charming.

Poor K. is very good to me—indeed, I must say that everybody feels strongly and rightly towards my dear father. They are kind to me in a great measure for his sake. Poor as he has lately been, he has done so much good—good that mere money could not do—by uncompromising, unflinching justice. Whoever was oppressed had a friend; whoever sought aid in any proper object had a zealous, hearty advocate. Be sure, my beloved friend, that when I say a country gentleman's life is one of widespreading usefulness, I speak of what I know. There is not a poor person within

ten miles who does not bless my dear father—ay, and many not poor, who sought advice, and a helping hand, and a voice never silent, when it could promote the welfare, or the prosperity, or the harmless pleasure of others. Forgive me when I say this: but why should I not? All the authorship in the world would never win the love and respect that awaits upon a character so firm in the right and so full of active good-will towards his kind. God bless him! Even in his own extreme feebleness he neither forgets those whom he could help (his last relapse was brought on by an attempt to go to the bench last Saturday to serve a neighbor, and, although forced to return without alighting, he accomplished his object by sending for his brother magistrates to the door), nor his gratitude towards those who are so good to me. Even to-night he spoke to me of "dear Miss Barrett." Once again, beloved friend, I do not ask you to forgive this —I should not love you as I do if I could doubt your sympathy.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS BARRETT.

Three Mile Cross, Monday night, Sept. 17, 1842.

MY DEAREST,—Yesterday I had a curious letter from a dear friend now at Dresden, Mrs. H. Westmacott, whose husband is brother of the professor of sculpture, and himself a sculptor of no mean rank. They are there for the purpose of educating their children; and she (a very clever woman) writes, that since the beginning of March not a drop of rain has fallen, that the drought is unparalleled in the memory of man, the fields looking like portions of the desert, the highways like roads of rock-work, the burning sky without a cloud, the light wind scorching like fire, the nights without dew, the trees without a leaf, the crops of turnip and beet devoured by field-mice, who swarm like the locusts of Egypt, the cabbages destroyed by caterpillars, the water-mills stopped (and there are no windmills in that part of Germany), navigation long at a stand, and horsemen riding through the Elbe; sheep and cattle fed with chopped straw, or killed for a hundredth part of their original cost; provisions of all kinds more than doubled; washing, bleaching, scouring of every sort prohibited, and water sold at a penny

a quart in the streets. Mrs. Westmacott is a very clever woman; and her letter, as graphic and truthful as a bit of De Foe, really touches one to read. I hate heat and drought —really preferring rain and cold—and have not ceased since the arrival of her letter to thank God for living in our temperate climate.

Mr. May says that my father is better, if he would but think so. But *that* he is so far from doing, that to-day he refused any dinner, and, having risen at twelve o'clock, went to bed at two, so that we have been compelled to feed him with fruit, and brandy-and-water, and rich cake, sopped through one of those cups with covers to them constructed for the bedridden, and I am now writing at his bedside; when he would be so much better up! And he ought to get out to-morrow; but of that I have small hope. Every day, and twenty times a day, he says that he shall die before the sun rises again, that he shall never see me again, and so forth. I am sure that, in different forms, he repeats this a hundred times in the twenty-four hours: he says it much oftener than everything else put together. The strange thing is, that the effect upon me never changes, I hear it always with the same shock; and the power of saddening and depression which such words possess rather increases than diminishes with repetition. This is, of course, great weakness in me—a great proof of the nervousness which such unvaried anxiety and fatigue have induced. Nothing keeps me alive but air—my evening walk up the hill and through the trees (an avenue of splendid oaks three quarters of a mile long), then down another turfy hill to an open grove of oak on one side, on the other a patch of varied groups of tall trees and underwood, hawthorn, wild-rose, and holly; the holly rising into the forest trees, and yet fencing round the different clumps, so various in size and shape, with a short, uniform hedge about three feet high, most peculiar in its effect and most beautiful. Several artists to whom I have shown it say that they never before saw the holly assume such a character—two characters united so singularly—full twenty of these patches of oak, beech, and elm rising out of the turf being filled to the very bottom with hoary

hawthorn, tall holly, and pendent bramble and brier, while this hedge of holly, uniform as box in a garden, surrounds every clump. Fancy how beautiful these patches of woodland—all diversified in size and shape, rising from fine green turf, and divided by a road from an open grove—stand, with a distance of small enclosures, some arable, some water meadow; and imagine the comfort I find in the absolute solitude, the repose, the silence of such a walk!

Some of my neighbors (kind people in the main) are unreasonable enough to expect that my one hour of liberty should be spent in calling upon them; but that is out of the question. Even for Mrs. Niven I could not make that sacrifice. That one walk keeps me alive. To-night it was much troubled: Flush found a hare, and quested it for two miles. I heard him the whole time, and could follow by the ear every step that they took, and called in desperate fear, lest some keeper should kill my pet. (To be sure, as Ben and my father said when I returned and told my fright, "Flush is too well known for that.") But you can comprehend my alarm at finding that, the more I called, the more Flushie would not come; whilst he was making the welkin ring with a tongue unrivalled amongst all the spaniels that ever followed game. Instead of pitying me, both my father and Ben were charmed at the adventure. The most provoking part of it was that when, after following the hare to a copse on the other side of the avenue, he had at length come back to me, he actually, upon crossing the scent again, as we were returning homeward, retraced his steps and followed the game back to cover again. This, which was the most trying circumstance of all to me, was exactly what, as proving the fineness of his nose, Ben and his master gloried in. Indeed Ben caught him up in his arms, and declared that he would back him against any spaniel in England for all that he was worth in the world. So I suppose to-morrow he'll run away again!

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Carlton Hill, Penrith, Dec. 16, 1842.

I have this moment heard from my brother, my dearest Miss Mitford, of the death of your beloved father. I well know how devoted was your attachment to him, and most truly feel for the sorrow this event will cause you. But the same sweet and loving nature that bound you so faithfully to him through life will teach you to find lasting consolation from remembering how peaceful was his end, and will also enable you to find pleasure and comfort from the attachment of a host of friends, who will all be ready to claim a share of you now that you will be no longer absorbed by one dear object at home. I feel very grateful for your remembering me at such a moment, and I do entreat you to believe that, though my poor, worn-out stump of a pen has well-nigh lost the power of writing letters, my heart and affections are by no means in the same dilapidated condition, and that I venture to look forward to some bright future summer when you will come and see me, and my lakes, and my grand-children, and my son Tom, and my pretty cottage, and, though last, not least, your old acquaintance, Wordsworth. God bless you, dear friend, and believe me,

Very affectionately yours, F. TROLLOPE.

MISS SEDGWICK *to* MISS MITFORD.

Boston, June 29, 1843.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I should long ago have written to you, but that repeated domestic sorrows left me little cheerfulness to communicate to others, and for the last year my eyes have been in a condition to preclude all use of them not necessary. They are now better, and improving, and I, who thought time and sorrow had worn out the hopefulness of my nature, begin to look with some faint expectation to a better state of things. Now, my dear Miss Mitford, that your long trial is past, I trust that rest, and the natural elasticity of your spirit, and the most blessed consciousness of your filial fidelity, and, above all, your religious trust, have restored your tranquillity. More than

that, in the autumn of our life, neither nature, philosophy, nor religion can help us to, and, thank God, that cannot be taken long from a mind firmly fixed in faith. I know not what saves those who are without religious trust from a mad-house or utter prostration when those they lean upon here are torn from them.

I am rejoiced to learn, through our friend Mr. Kenyon and others, that your harassing pecuniary anxieties are relieved, and that your honorable spirit has been gratified by the complete satisfaction of obligations contracted to alleviate your father's sufferings. Theodore Sedgwick entered with myself most cordially into a project to express the sympathy of your friends on this side the Atlantic. We were glad to have it prevented by the only circumstance that should prevent it, the generous and sufficient testimony of those who are your natural protectors and friends. May their sun shine upon you to the last!

I believe I have never given you an account of the product of the geranium-seeds which you so kindly sent to me. I shared them with my friend Mr. Downing, who is a horticulturist by profession, a gentleman who has written some charming books on landscape-gardening and rural architecture. He showed me with pride his Mitfords, as he calls them. No one could more highly estimate the parentage of the plants, or more surely continue and improve the race. I, in my humble way too, and in spite of my absences and our cold northern airs, have still some beautiful memorials of you, which I trust will long maintain, fresh and odorous, a visible relationship between the Berkshire of the old world and the new.

You may remember my blooming niece, Kate: she is married and settled in Boston, and I am here to take her to Berkshire with me, being too far gone in my second childhood to be able to face our old home without her. Your friend Theodore has been sadly afflicted by the death of a second and only boy—a magnificent little fellow, who looked as little like death, during his short life, as an Infant Hercules; and, yet, as his mother, whose prophetic love had never been quieted, had predicted, he died at the moment

he attained the age at which his brother had been taken. They have two bright girls, and Theodore bears with admirable resolution these repeated disappointments.

My dear Miss Mitford, it will give me true pleasure to hear of any good that befalls you, and I am sure no evil can happen to you without its shadow falling on me.

Yours affectionately,

A. M. SEDGWICK.

CHAPTER XIX.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF STACKALL, BY THE REV. W. LYNN.—LETTERS FROM MRS. HOWITT, SERGEANT TALFOURD, ALEXANDER DYCE, MRS. CLIVE, MRS. TROLLOPE, AND CRABBE ROBINSON.

REV. W. LYNN *to* MISS MITFORD.

King's Bromley, Lichfield, Aug. 8, 1845.

MY DEAR MADAM,—Having received the answer which I required, I shall now be happy to tell you all I know about my interesting friend and late parishioner, Thomas Stackall.

It was not until I was about to leave Cledbury Mortimer, where I resided two years, that I even heard of Stackall's poetical talents, and only then by chance. I was the more surprised at his secrecy on this point, because on so many other subjects he had been most frank and communicative with me, but on this I soon found that he was exceedingly diffident. However, when he saw that concealment was no longer possible, he at once gave me a full account of all his poetical rambles. From the conversations which I then had with him, and from the letters which he has since written to me, I am enabled to give you the following account:

Thomas Stackall was born January 7th, 1807, at Kinfare, near Stourbridge, in the county of Stafford; his parents were among the poorer classes, and his education was humble in proportion, being only such as is usually given in a village school to the children of the poor; nor after twelve does he seem to have had any regular school instruction; indeed he describes himself as being entirely left to his own desires from twelve to fifteen, without employment or restraint of any kind. We shall now see how these three years were spent. They might have proved disastrous to him, for none are in such danger as the *idle;* but God preserved him. He

was winding a cord round the youth's heart which gently held him from evil, and from corrupting companions; and this cord was the love of the solemn, the beautiful, and the innocent in nature. Much of his time during this period he says he passed in lonely woods, and on the banks of the Severn, occupying himself in angling, at which he was "quite a proficient," and in making mimic water-wheels with his knife, and fixing them in the miniature cataracts which gurgled over the mossy roots at the river-side. "It was then," he says, "that I first began rhyming," though he does not remember what his first production was. It was then, too, that his mechanical genius, which has ever since gone hand-in-hand with his passion for poetry, began to develop itself, the mimic water-wheel being its first essay. The innocent pleasures of these days are well described in the following verses, which he wrote a few years after. I imagine, however, from the appearance of the manuscript, which is now in my possession, and from grammatical deficiency in the first four lines, that some preceding verses have been torn off.

"My native home, in the woods away,
Where I pass'd, with content, my youth's bright day;
Where Nature and Love, the shades among,
Imbued my heart with affections strong.
Oh! tell me not of the sights so rare,
And the sounds so sweet that in cities are;
Far dearer to me is Nature's chaunt
And Nature's scenes in my woodland haunt—
For I love the song of the tuneful bird,
And the ring-dove's coo in the distance heard,
The echoing sound of the cow-boy's call,
And the dash of the mimic waterfall;
And I love to stray to my lonely nook
'Mid the flowerets gay by the crystal brook;
To stretch me at length in the grassy glade,
And survey the beauties of light and shade;
To behold the light bound of the timid roe,
Or gaze on the river's ceaseless flow,
And at eve thro' the tangled copse to roam
To the dear delights of my woodland home."

But young Stackall was soon to leave the "dear delights of his woodland home." He had just turned his fifteenth

year when he was taken to Cledbury Mortimer to be apprenticed to a paper manufacturer, with whom he remained twelve years. But he never cordially liked his trade: it was too unintellectual, and afforded no scope for his prevailing genius. Meanwhile, however, he had been improving himself with great diligence in the principles of mechanics, which he studied chiefly in an elementary work by Ferguson. By way of *practice* he tried his hand occasionally on a friend's watches. His success was so great that, in a year or two after, he finally and forever abandoned the rags and took to the *mainspring*, and is now established at Cledbury Mortimer as a country watchmaker with a good reputation and a fair trade. I must not forget to mention that he has a wife and three children.

I have now to tell you of a very interesting and, I believe, important discovery which he has made in the art of watchmaking. About a year and a half ago he invented a new movement, by which, at a comparatively little cost, all the real advantages of the "escapement" can be introduced into the old *vertical* watches. The effect of this new principle is to give steadiness to the movements, to lessen friction, and in fact to make even old watches go right well again. He has already introduced this new movement into several watches—amongst others into one belonging to a friend of mine—and with *complete success*. At present, he tells me, he is in treaty for his new "escapement" with a watch-manufacturer for whom he is finishing a first-rate movement. And then the matter will most likely be taken out of his hands, as the poor man has no capital to enable him to make the most of his invention and bring it before the public.

I have now before me the manuscript of two pieces which he wrote when he was twenty-two years of age. One is entitled "Boaz and Ruth" (dramatic poetry); the other, "Persecution and Piety," a religious drama, taken from the 6th and 7th chapters of Maccabees. They are characterized by considerable command of language, correctness of thought, and some imagination in filling up the outline of the text. The following, from "Ruth," is a fair specimen of the whole.

Ruth has just left her mother (chap. ii. 2, 3) for the purpose of gleaning after the reapers. As she walks along she hears the birds warbling their sweet matins, and exclaims:

"I'll raise my voice, and join their pleasing strain.
King of glory, Lord of all,
Ruler of this earthly ball;
Ev'ry plant and ev'ry flower,
Ev'ry shrub and ev'ry tree,
Show thy wisdom, love, and power,
And impartiality:
From thy helpless handmaid's tongue,
Oh accept a sacred song!

"Earth's Creator, wise and good,
Wake, oh wake my gratitude!
May my ardent praise arise
Swift before thy glorious throne
As the morning sacrifice,
And regard me as thine own.
O thou weary wand'rers' friend,
Up to thee my thanks ascend!

"I'll cross with haste this dew-bespangled mead,
Where lowing cattle on the herbage feed,
And shape my course to yonder tillage-land,
Where shocks of well-set barley thickly stand,
And ask the leader of the rural train
To let me with his maidens pick the grain.

"O Lord of Hosts, who reign'st enthron'd in light,
Grant that I may find favor in his sight,
And give me strength to labor well this day
That, when Night draws her sable shrouds, I may
Have gathered much: for then the pleasing sight
Will fill my Naomi's heart with pure delight!

(Entering the reapers' field.)

"As with a bridle, Lord, control my tongue,
If I should converse with this joyous throng;
And may my words and actions plainly prove
That I am rul'd by thy superior love."

Four or five years after he had written dramatic pieces he published a little collection of songs and poems, some of which, I am told, have become quite household words among the cottagers around him. As you have a copy of this collection, I need not give any extracts from it. I would only say that two favorites are "The Rea" and

"The Cradle." But his little poems no sooner appeared in print than he discovered here and there many instances of bad taste, and he was now as anxious to suppress as he had been before to publish. Since then I believe he has only written one short hymn, on "The Extension of Christ's Kingdom." His time is now chiefly taken up with his new invention.

This short sketch contains all I have at present to say about the humble poet of Cledbury Mortimer, but should it in any degree increase that interest which you have already so kindly expressed for him; or should it—in the event of its appearing in the periodical you name—awaken in others a generous and *well-directed* sympathy, I shall be happy and well rewarded.

I remain, my dear madam, yours very truly,

W. Lynn.

Mrs. Howitt *to* Miss Mitford.

The Elms, Lower Clapton, July 7 [1846?].

My dear Miss Mitford,—I must tell you what, I am sure, will please you, and that is that Miss Cushman, the American actress, is one of your warmest admirers. She acted in "Rienzi" in her own land. She is a glorious creature—a splendid actress, and appears as superior in character as in talent. One thing only she seems to want to make her the first, the very first, actress of the day, and that is beauty of face. It is a drawback to the first effect as an actress, but she is glorious, spite of this—and can more be said of her? There will not, perhaps, be the *furor* about her among the *young* men, but the sound-hearted will acknowledge her power and her greatness. But, after all, she is *beautiful*—beautiful in the highest and noblest sense; beautiful in intellectual expression, in feeling, in sentiment! I know no one who so rapidly took hold on our hearts as she did, and has done.

This glorious and noble creature, then, loves and admires you, and has a desire to pay you a visit. Will you write, and bid her welcome to your "bower of roses"? Her address is 92 New Bond Street.

We, too, some time or other, will look in upon you, if you will permit it. For the present, however, we are very busy, working like dragons—if dragons do work—to be at liberty for two or three months in the autumn in Italy. It is worth working for, and almost seems too good for our actual enjoyment, but we are at present believing that we may accomplish it; and that is charming.

My husband is just about setting out to Scotland for a few weeks. He is working at his "Homes and Haunts of the Poets," which will be his next work—a work which you will like.

Pardon this scrawl, and, with my husband's kind regards, believe me, my dear Miss Mitford, Yours ever,

M. Howitt.

Sergeant Talfourd *to* Miss Mitford.

Sergeant's Inn, July 8, 1846.

My dear Miss Mitford,—I should have written yesterday to acknowledge your letter and subscription to the Haydon Fund, which will be very consolatory to his family, but that the sudden death of our excellent Chief-justice has deranged everything—almost the minds of those who practised daily before him.

I think there is no doubt of our obtaining all we can wish for Mrs. and Miss Haydon. The Royal Academy have very nobly subscribed £50, and the wealthy patrons of art will, I doubt not, contribute.

I trust Miss Barrett, to whom in his last paper, irrespective of a will, Mr. Haydon leaves his papers, will not involve herself in difficulty by acting on his wishes without very sound advice, for he was (as he states) £3000 in debt, and it would be a sad thing if "our great poetess" (as I may justly call her) should be entangled in a dispute with his creditors, as she might have been by taking care of his property before, if bankruptcy or insolvency had arisen.

Believe me to remain, my dear Miss Mitford,

Ever truly yours, T. Talfourd.

Sergeant Talfourd had been educated at Dr. Valpy's school at Reading, and was a life-long friend of Miss Mit-

ford.* His love of the drama, which led to the production of "Ion," seems to have been fostered by his school-training. He introduced Miss Mitford's plays to Macready, and was often consulted by her on literary subjects. She says that "his eloquence was great and glorious," and that he was brilliant in conversation. When she was staying at his house in Russell Square, the Duke of Devonshire called on her, and there she met many celebrities—Douglas Jerrold, Ellen Tree,† Crabbe Robinson, Landor, Kenyon, etc.

She likens Talfourd to Haydon in conversation, manner, and enthusiasm. Haydon's history and suicide are well known. He attempted to retrieve his fortune by exhibiting a cartoon opposite Tom Thumb's rooms. But the "General" proved the only successful attraction, and Miss Mitford says that "the grotesque bitterness of the antagonism was too much for Haydon — the dwarf slew the giant." Haydon had been introduced to Miss Barrett by Miss Mitford, and had left with Miss Barrett, a few days before his death, his papers and the portrait he took of Miss Mitford.

MRS. HOWITT *to* MISS MITFORD.

The Elms, Clapham, Dec. 16, 1846.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I wrote to you several months ago to request you to become a contributor to the *People's Journal*, in which we had just then become concerned, and you were kind enough to consent. Since then this little periodical has succeeded far beyond the most sanguine expectations. . . . But we shall withdraw entirely from Mr. Saunders and the *People's Journal* as soon as possible. This is very mortifying to us, because it is ourselves who have made its success. However, to save ourselves, we must get free, and it is now Mr. Howitt's determination to commence his own journal on the 1st of January; and thus he will be able to work freely and fully for the people and literature, without danger or impediment of any kind.

Our friend, Henry Chorley, knows the whole business, and has promised to talk with you about it on Sunday,

* They both died in the same year. † Afterwards Mrs. Kean.

when he is with you. And what we now want, dear Miss Mitford, is that you will allow us to announce your name with those of our "illustrious friends," as Douglas Jerrold calls them, who will support us in our undertaking. And more than this, we want you *really* and truly to give us some nice little country sketch for one of our early numbers. Do this, dear friend, and you will really serve us.

We have seen a good deal of Alfred Tennyson lately, and like him quite as well as the *man* as the poet. He is really a noble creature, with one of the purest, kindest spirits.

William unites with me in kindest regards.

I am, dear Miss Mitford, yours faithfully,

M. Howitt.

Mr. A. Dyce *to* Miss Mitford.

9 Gray's Inn Square, London, Aug. 16, 1847.

My dear Miss Mitford,—At last I send you the "Beggar Girl," and, unfortunately, a copy in such beggarly condition, that I cannot say "I have much pleasure in sending it to you." But since, from all accounts, there is little chance of a better copy turning up, I must request you to overlook the filth and shabbiness of the present one. I should be sorry to answer "no" to any request which you might make me, else I should certainly refuse the verses and autograph (my verses and my autograph!) to your fair young friend, whose name, by-the-bye, it is impossible to make out from Harness's vile handwriting.* The fancy that "the gods had made me poetical" has, I assure you, long ago passed away with many other pleasing delusions.

Believe me, my dear Miss Mitford,

Always very truly yours,

Alex. Dyce.

Mrs. Clive *to* Miss Mitford.

Whitfield, Feb. 21 [1849?].

My dear Miss Mitford,—The neighbors and we have set up a book-club since the beginning of this year, and I

* Mr. Harness's writing was sometimes microscopically small, though generally clear.

want to beg you to tell me of some *booklings* for it. We have got Macaulay and Layard, and the "Monasteries of the Levant," and other big books, but I want some moderately moral French novel, or some very amusing two-and-sixpence or five-shilling English book, to keep the thing going. Such a book as "La Mare au Diable," or "La Chasse au Roman," would be the thing, or Murray's "Life of Condé," or his "Memoirs of a Missionary." Can you kindly recommend some?

I hope the mild weather has agreed with you, and the returning spring will find you able to enjoy it. The children bring me primroses from the woods and violets from the garden every day, and we have all enjoyed days in which we could loiter along on foot or on horseback without thinking of our gloves or our comforters. We went to Hartlebury last month, the Bishop of Worcester's. It is a very picturesque place, the gardens of which are made out of part of the moat, and the walk to them is under the castle-wall, with ivy and myrtle bushes growing against it. The bishop seems a sort of Knight Templar in his castle, with his great courtyard, great hall, ample dining-room, and long corridor, where he reads morning prayers to his family and guests. Nicolas Breakspear, they say, was Bishop of Worcester before he was pope. Bishop Hough's library is in the house—an heirloom of the see, and Latimer's memory is fresh about the place. Our own bishop, the much-discussed Hampden, is a mild, shy man, who keeps his talents under the thickest veil he can find; but he is willing to talk on any *un*learned subject. He misses the lilacs of his parsonage in the garden of his palace.

Mr. Clive desires me not to close my letter without remembering him very kindly to you. Pray accept our united best wishes, and believe me, sincerely yours,

CAROLINE CLIVE.

Mrs. Archer Clive was the author of the well-known sensational novel, "Paul Ferroll." Miss Mitford speaks in commendation of her poetry: "Mrs. Archer Clive has just published a poem with a touch of Scott's landscape power;"

and again: "I have seen Mrs. Archer Clive, a great friend. She sent me the other day her poem, 'The Queen's Ball,' of which the subject is most striking—one hundred and fifty persons were invited, who are dead! The Clives are all rich." Miss Mitford remarks that Mrs. Clive was charming, cheerful, and light-hearted, in strange contrast to the melancholy tone of her writings.

SERGEANT TALFOURD *to* MISS MITFORD.

Russell Square, Jan. 3, 1852.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Although I have not yet received from Mr. Bentley the volumes your kindness appropriated to me,* I have made acquaintance with them at the Athenæum; not indeed fully yet—for they are so popular that yesterday I was unable to find one of them out of hand. I have, however, enjoyed enough of them to be able to wish you joy of a new work worthy of your great and enduring reputation—with enough of happily selected subjects to make it interesting to all, and enough of personal reference to render it doubly interesting to your large circle of friends. Turning naturally to the chapter which commemorates the "marriage of true hearts," and of high geniuses, in the destiny of the Brownings, I was happy to find myself honored by the revival of a recollection in which you form so gratifying a part, and I was, if possible, still more touched by your most kind allusion to me in the concluding chapter, in which the scene of some of my very happiest hours is the subject of a noble farewell. I rejoice greatly to find that, while the association connected with the delightful spot will never perish, you have found so pleasant a home without violent disruption—only, in truth, another corner in the same garden; for all the neighborhood *is* a garden, only adorned beyond the reach of art. I hope I may one day visit you there, and renew old happiness for an hour; but I have no call now to Reading, and my long absence from home on the circuits renders me almost ashamed to propose solitary excursions; so that I am afraid I shall

* "Recollections of a Literary Life."

not very soon realize the hope. I trust, however, before the next autumn's gold is quite shivered I shall walk very gently through "our village" to Swallowfield.

Lady Talfourd joins with me in all the good wishes the season prompts, and trusting that you may have many happy new years to give us more happy books,

I remain, my dear Miss Mitford, ever truly yours,

TH. TALFOURD.

MRS. TROLLOPE *to* MISS MITFORD.

Florence, April, 1852.

The sight of your well-known and dearly remembered handwriting, dearest Miss Mitford, produced an effect upon me that I can hardly describe. It was, for a moment, very much as if I had been looking at you—and greatly did I rejoice at the sight, but, alas! the precious bit of paper was soon exhausted, and then I only wished the more that I could get sight of yourself. I had been out all the morning, and the note was given to me with Mr. Fields's card as I went into the dining-room. My son immediately proclaimed his intention of calling on Mr. Fields on the following day; and this he did, but without being so fortunate as to see him. We were at that time in all the bustle of the last days of the Carnival, and *especially* occupied in preparing for charades, which were to be performed at the house of a friend, who gave a ball afterwards, expected to be one of the gayest of the season, and for this entertainment I procured an invitation for Mr. Fields; but, alas! instead of having the pleasure of seeing him, I received a note from him informing me that he was on the point of starting for Rome. His purpose in going at that moment was, I presume, to be present at the ceremonies of the Holy Week. These are no longer, I am told, so splendid as they have been, but there is still enough of ceremony left to gratify those who have never before witnessed anything of the kind. I have been in daily hope of seeing him return, but I now suppose that he is gone on to Naples; yet still I hope that we may catch sight of him before he takes his final leave of Italy, and before we quit Florence, according to our annual custom, for the summer.

We have a very delightful residence here, one pleasant feature of which is a large garden, where we literally sit under the shade of our orange-trees; but, though this is very pleasant, we deem it prudent during the heat of an Italian summer to get away to the fresh breezes of the mountain districts. The Baths of Lucca are within fifty miles of us, and it is probable that we shall revisit them this summer. But for the next two months we shall continue here, and shall hope during that time to catch a sight of your wandering friend.

And so you are living at Swallowfield. That name is redolent of youth, and singing birds, and shady lanes, and banks of primroses and violets. And happy am I to say that I could *still* wander for miles among them with as much pleasure and pretty nearly as much activity as half a century ago. *Of course* you have a garden, for *you* would not be *you* without it. You would find our beautiful Italy wofully behind your scientific England in the *cultivation* of flowers. You would scorn our very best geraniums as you would the merest weed, nor do I know of anything, except our noble orange and lemon trees, in which our gardens could compete with yours. Still less could we rival you in forest trees. My eye has learned to love the pale gray-green of the olive, but, compared with an oak or an elm, it is but as a sickly dwarf beside a stalwart giant. But for all that, there is a most delicious sort of harmony in the whole landscape, which enchants me beyond all I have ever looked upon; and this, as I take it, is owing to the purity of the light, and the surpassing and intense blueness of the sky. Our blue is not like your blue; it is deeply dark, though as clear as limpid water. Claude, and Claude alone, gives some idea of this. The *clearness* of light, which is so marvellously attained by the Flemish artists, is of a totally different quality. As to our scenery, Switzerland, Germany—ay, and England, too, can often show *much* finer. But for the *effect*, and its power of bewitching the eye, it is magical!

Believe me, my dear Miss Mitford,

Very affectionately yours,

FRANCIS TROLLOPE.

H. C. Robinson *to* Miss Mitford.

30 Russell Square, Aug. 24, 1852.

My dear Miss Mitford,—There can be no objection taken to the school to which you propose to give £200. Nor is it likely that any of us five will object to be considered as the joint trustee-donor of what is proposed by any other of us.

The only thing to be apprehended was that, as two of the trustees are *ladies*, one of them—having caught the influenza of the season, which seizes especially imaginative and tender natures—might have been desirous to endow a *nunnery*. Our reverend associate inclines, I believe, to the Genevan rather than Romish side of the Anglican Church, and it is very likely that he will make a proposal similar to yours. You make a remark in which I fully concur, as to Mrs. Niven's personal feelings. She might probably, had her attention been drawn to the subject, have been more precise in her intimations.

Had I been aware of her intentions, I should certainly have suggested to her that she might do good in the way of example by devoting the whole £1000 to the cause of *female* education, which is neglected in England disgracefully.

My friend Mrs. *Reid* (a most heroically generous woman) advanced £1600 to set on foot the *Ladies'* College, but it is struggling against unpopularity. Mrs. Niven was herself in the catalogue of poets, though she had not acquired the distinction conferred on one of her trustees. And therefore, had nothing better presented itself to you, it would have suited well, to *you* especially, to be the appointee in such a case. Endowments ought to vary, and unusual gifts lead to a repetition of them. On this ground I successfully applied to Lady Chantrey to contribute to the Flaxman Gallery—she being the foundress of the Chantrey Gallery. Miss Mitford's name is known in the world, and would have served to bring into notice one of the lady colleges recently set up in London. The indirect effect of all acts of beneficence is often more important than the direct. There is matter to dream about for nine months at least. I have not mentioned the subject to Miss Denman yet.

To-morrow I set out to join the Archæological Institute at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The fine season for travelling is yet to come. Wishing you the enjoyment of many seasons as fine as the present, I am faithfully yours,

H. C. Robinson.

Miss Mitford seems to have known Crabbe Robinson through her friends, the Perrys.

CHAPTER XX.

LETTERS FROM JAMES T. FIELDS, MISS DE QUINCEY, J. RUSKIN, SERGEANT TALFOURD, AND HARRIET MARTINEAU.

THE best portrait of Miss Mitford was taken by Lucas in 1852. She made it a present to Mr. Fields, and it is now in America.

MR. FIELDS *to* MISS MITFORD.

72 Regent Street, London, Saturday morning [1852?].

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—Thank you heartily for the notes to Mr. Chorley and Mr. Lucas. I shall probably call to-day on Mr. Lucas, as I am anxious to see my picture, as you may well suppose. That copy of "Bentley" I put into my pocket on purpose for you the day I went down to Swallowfield. I have got already several for myself. Pray keep the one I left. That day at Swallowfield, and that ride to the cricket-match! Ah! these things will all tend to make my embarkation for America sad indeed. But I don't intend to go very soon, I promise you. Every day of my stay in England adds another week to my intentions touching the return home. The truth is, no man was ever treated with such kindness before in Europe, I am convinced, and I am in no hurry to leave a land I love so much. What I have done to deserve all this, I do not remember. The days and nights are not long enough to include the pleasant things that are constantly happening to me. Yesterday I breakfasted with dear Mr. Kenyon, and did not forget your message of love to him. He is the same genial and delightful person I had the good fortune to meet before I went into Italy. And how much I owe to him for bringing me to your door at Three Mile Cross! Ah! I wish it were in my power to repay something of all the kindness I am constantly receiving at his hands.

You ask if Longfellow is a clergyman. He is not, and never was. His brother, Samuel Longfellow, now residing in Paris, was once a pulpit man, but he has given up the profession, and taken to practice. I remember a good story of Dr. Channing in this way. The *reverend* doctor and the *medical* doctor were both at a party in Boston one evening, and, some one being taken ill, the man of medicines, Dr. Walter Channing, was sent for. The servant entered the room where the brothers were seated, and said, "Dr. Channing is wanted." "Which Dr. Channing?" said Walter, the physician; "the one who *preaches*, or the one who *practises?*"

I have a great favor to ask of you. My brother-in-law and his wife (William Ware's niece) have arrived in London, and they, I know, would be delighted beyond measure should I ask them to accompany me to Swallowfield some day during their stay here. Will you allow me to say to them, "Come, jump into the cart and go down to Reading, where I will show you Miss Mitford's former residence, and afterwards take you over to see her for an hour"? Of course I do not intend to inflict you with a *long* visit, but I should be glad to give them the opportunity of meeting one of whom they have heard so much, and of whose writings they are such warm admirers. It would only amount to a call, as I do not wish you to fatigue yourself beyond a little chat in your cottage. It will be something they will never forget, and a favor I feel inclined to ask, knowing your good-nature in these matters. I shall not say a word to them till I first hear from you.

Sam was quite right: we did have to gallop for it that day we left your house; and shall I soon forget how the bystanders stared as we came thundering up to the station just in time to use the English cry of "All right," and whiz off to London! But that ride along the wooded avenues in your pony-chaise, and the scene on that grassy plain! It was all beautiful exceedingly, and I care not how soon I get away into the country again, "through the green leaves exploring." I almost envy Sam his seat in that fairy car, as the little nag flies over the ground, in his funny little way, so

swiftly. But I shall go again to Swallowfield, and enjoy another drive with you, ere long.

Ever yours, J. T. FIELDS.

The next letter is a reply to one written by Miss Mitford to Mr. De Quincey, at Mr. Fields's suggestion.

MISS DE QUINCEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

Mavis Bush, Lasswade, Oct. 13, 1852.

MY DEAR MADAM,—When your kind and most flattering letter arrived, my second sister and I, who generally act as my father's amanuenses, were paying a visit in Edinburgh; consequently, as my youngest sister is not yet broken in to this duty, it has gone thus long unanswered; and, if we were to give in to my father's desire, the chance is it would go totally so—not because he undervalues the honor you have done him, but because he rates it so highly that he determines to do it, not by proxy, but personally, and has already written something, I believe, little short of a good-sized pamphlet.* But, as experience teaches us that delays, if not hinderances, undreamed of by all but De Quincey philosophy, will occur before the time when it can be "signed, sealed, and delivered" to the post, we have begged that we may be allowed to send a sort of harbinger to explain why the answer is so long in making its appearance. I am therefore commissioned to say, with his most respectful regards, with what infinite pleasure he will avail himself of your and Mr. Pearson's courteous and hospitable invitation to visit you, should he ever be within a possible distance of doing so; but, as there is no immediate prospect of such being the case on his part, he and we join in hoping that, should you

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* Miss Mitford writes to Mr. Fields in December, 1852: "The pamphlet has not yet arrived. I fear it is forever buried in the De Quincey 'chaos.'" We find in "De Quincey's Life," by H. A. Page, that he eventually sent a letter to Miss Mitford, saying that he had already written three for her, and that the reason he did not generally finish and post his letters was that "whatever he may be writing becomes suddenly overspread by a dark frenzy of horror," which he does not attribute entirely to his former use of opium.

or Mr. Pearson be in our neighborhood, you will let us all have the happiness of making your acquaintance.

Few things for many years have given my father such unmingled gratification as your letter. I don't pretend to say *why*, as among his correspondents—if those can be called correspondents where the correspondence is all on one side —there are many who strike *us* as being as truly kind and gracious in their expression of good-will towards him as yourself; but such is the case.

I have just received a letter from your kind and genial favorite, Mr. Fields, and, should you not have heard from himself yet, I quote what he says of his passage: "We had what the other passengers called a good voyage, but what I suffered I will not attempt to describe; I can only say that when we sailed up Boston harbor I was an easier and better man." We fully agree with you, as far as our short acquaintance goes, in all you say in his praise, for we saw him not only in his character of a "thoroughly large-minded, liberal man," but also in that of a joyous, entertaining companion, and since then we have had to thank him for spreading papa's "good report" in places where most we feel pleasure in its going, yourself being the chief. He seems to be one of those sunny spirits who radiates his own bright warmth wherever he goes.

As regards your and Mr. Pearson's flattering inquiry about a collection of my father's articles in England, or whether the American edition will be available in this country, I leave him to answer for himself.

With kindest regards, in which my sisters beg to join (papa having already sent his both to you and Mr. Pearson), I beg to remain, my dear madam, with much respect,

Very faithfully, M. De Quincey.

Miss De Quincey *to* Miss Mitford.

Mavis Bush, Lasswade, March 14, 1853.

My dear Miss Mitford,—A few days ago I had a letter from Mr. Fields, in which he mentions some accident you have met with; but, taking it for granted that we have heard of it, he does not say of what nature, but merely expresses

his sympathy with us in what he justly supposes will be our feelings about it, having heard it. Papa wished me at the time to write directly and learn what it was, but I was on the eve of leaving home for a day only, as I then supposed, in such a hurry that I could not do so; and, having been from home more than a week, a longer time has elapsed than I expected, as I could not write *from* home, not having your address.

Papa tells me to say he heartily agrees with you in your admiration of Louis Napoleon (what if you have both arrived at your admiration of him by the most opposite roads, and for the most opposite reasons!), and he has been so disgusted by the senseless attacks made by the *Times* and other papers upon him that, but for the fiend Procrastination holding him back and causing him to become merely a great pavior in the way of good intentions, he would have done *his* part in exposing their folly in so totally forgetting how England had benefited by Louis *Nap's* conduct. This latter part is a *true* addition of my own to papa's message. I was also to tell you that he agreed with you too in your *detestation* of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but I told him you had not said you detested it, but that it was too painful to read; upon which he withdrew his message, but cherishes a hope that, if ever you do read it, you *will* detest it. . . .

Papa *does*, and my sisters would—but they are from home at present—join me in kindest regards, and hopes to hear a good report of you; and believe me to remain, dear Miss Mitford, Your sincere friend,

M. De Quincey.

In a letter to Mrs. Partridge dated January 27, 1847, Miss Mitford asks, "Have you read an Oxford graduate's 'Letters on Art'? The author, Mr. Ruskin, was here last week, and is certainly the most charming person that I have ever known." In her "Recollections of a Literary Life," published in 1852, she says that Mr. Ruskin will understand why she connects his name with the latest event which has happened to her, the necessary removal from her little cottage at Three Mile Cross. Mr. Ruskin was principally as-

sociated with Miss Mitford towards the end of her life, and especially after she was incapacitated by a fall from her pony-chaise. His kindness cheered her closing days; he sent her every book that would interest, and every delicacy that would strengthen her: attentions which will not surprise those who have heard of his large and thoughtful generosity.

J. Ruskin *to* Miss Mitford.

Keswick, Cumberland, Good Friday, 1853.

My dear Miss Mitford,—The pain of deep self-reproach was mixed with the delight which your letter gave me yesterday. Two months back I was each day on the point of writing to you to ask for your sympathy—the kindest and keenest sympathy that, I think, ever filled the breadth and depth of an unselfish heart. But my purpose was variously stayed, chiefly, as I remember, by the events on the Continent, fraught to me with very deep disappointment, and casting me into a depression and fever of spirit which, joined with some other circumstances nearer home, have, until now that I am resting with my kind wife among these quiet hills, denied me the heart to write cheerfully to those very dear friends to whom I would fain never write sadly. And now your letter comes with all its sweetness and all its sting. My very dear lady, believe me, I am deeply gratified for your goodness, in a state of wonderment at its continuance to me—cold and unthankful as I have seemed—and I earnestly hope that in future it may not so frequently have to take the form of forgiveness, nor my sense of it that of remorse.

Nor did I shrink more from the silent blame than from the painful news of your letter, though I conjecture that your escape, though narrow, was complete—you say nothing of any hurt received. I hate ponies and everything four-legged, except an ass colt and an arm-chair. But you are better and the spring is come, and I hope, for I am sure you will allow me, to bring my young wife to be rejoiced (under the shadow of her new and grievous lot) by your kind comforting. But pray keep her out of your garden, or she will certainly lose her wits with pure delight, or perhaps insist on

staying with you and letting me find my way through the world by myself: a task which I should not *now* like to undertake. I should be very, very happy just now but for these wild storm-clouds bursting on my dear Italy and my fair France, my occupation gone, and all my earthly treasures (except the one I have just acquired and the everlasting Alps) perilled amidst the "tumult of the people," the "imagining of vain things." Ah, my dear Miss Mitford, see what your favorite "Berangers" and "Gerald Griffins" do! But these are thoughts as selfish as they are narrow. I begin to feel that all the work I have been doing, and all the loves I have been cherishing, are ineffective and frivolous; that these are not times for watching clouds or dreaming over quiet waters, that more serious work is to be done, and that the time for endurance has come rather than for meditation, and for hope rather than for happiness. Happy those whose hope, without this severe and tearful rending-away of all the props and stability of earthly enjoyments, has been fixed "where the wicked cease from troubling." Mine was not; it was based on "those pillars of the earth" which are "astonished at His reproof."

I have, however, passed this week very happily here. We have a good clergyman, Mr. Myers, and I am recovering trust and tranquillity, though I had been wiser to have come to your fair English pastures and flowering meadows, rather than to these moorlands, for they make me feel too painfully the splendor, not to be in any wise resembled or replaced, of those mighty scenes, which I can reach no more—at least for a time. I am thinking, however, of a tour among our English abbeys—a feature which our country possesses of peculiar loveliness. As for our mountains or lakes, it is in vain that they are defended for their finish or their prettiness. The people who admire them after Switzerland do not understand Switzerland—even Wordsworth does not. Our mountains are mere bogs and lumps of spongy moorland, and our lakes are little swampy fish-ponds. It is curious I can take more pleasure in the chalk downs of Sussex, which pretend to nothing, than in these would-be hills, and I believe I shall have more pleasure in your pretty lowland

scenery and richly painted gardens than in all the pseudo-sublime of the barren Highlands, except Killiecrankie. I went and knelt beside the stone that marks the spot of Claver's death-wound and prayed for more such spirits—we need them now.

My wife begs me to return her sincere thanks for your kind message, and to express to you the delight with which she looks forward to being presented to you—remembering what I told her among some of my first pleadings with her, that, whatever faults she might discover in her husband, he could at least promise her friends, whom she would have every cause to love and to honor. She needs them, but I think also deserves them.

Ever, my dear Miss Mitford, believe me,
Faithfully and affectionately yours,
J. Ruskin.

P.S.—I ought to tell you that we have sent cards to *no one*, or most certainly this formality would not have been omitted with Miss Mitford.

Miss Mitford says: "There is a richness and transparency in Mr. Ruskin's writing that has scarcely ever been equalled. Such beauty and power of expression is not to be found in any letters which I have received. He is the best letter-writer of his or any age."

Mr. Talfourd *to* Miss Mitford.

Oxford Circuit, Oxford, March 6, 1853.

My dear Miss Mitford,—I send you by post one of a very few copies I had *printed* of a drama, which had supplied materials of idle labor at intervals for some years, as I know that anything in the form of composition in which you have wrought so much, and in respect of which we have had so many exciting passages of life together, will have an interest for you besides that which I know you would feel in any effort of mine. I have not given any other copy away in Berkshire, not to any of our mutual friends, except our best and kindest, William Harness; nor has it, I think, been

seen by a dozen people, so that it is a very private sin at present, and likely to remain so, unless it should be thought better of by friends than by its author.

I hear, with great sorrow, that you are still suffering from the effects of your accident, and therefore I hope you will not incur the fatigue of acknowledging this, but leave the slender merits of this work of declining age to be discussed when I next see you, which shall certainly be the next time I get a day in Berkshire.

I dare say you remember how prettily Jackson, the new Bishop of Lincoln, played Hamlet—in spite of our dear doctor's teaching.* What a delight to him the bishopric would have been, had he lived to know it!

Believe me to remain, my dear Miss Mitford,

Ever truly yours, TH. TALFOURD.

MISS MARTINEAU *to* MISS MITFORD.

The Knoll, Ambleside, Jan. 25 [No date—1853 ?].

DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I am obliged to you for introducing to me your agreeable young friend. I have seen him once *here*, and I am to see him next at his airy lodgings at Longbrigg. He made us promise to visit him some evening, and we hope to do so while the fine weather lasts. The "we" means my youngest sister, Mrs. Higginson, and her children, who are with me at present. Mr. Payne will have us all, and he has the grandest thing in all the neighborhood to show us—in the view from the home-field. He is kind enough to send me his volume of poems to-day, and I must make more acquaintance with him in that way before we meet next. He has every appearance of being in good health; and I trust his critical period in that respect has passed.

I wish he could have given me a better account of your health. I fear you, with your love of eternal nature, and your habits of country roving, must feel your privations very keenly. But I see, with a sort of sad pleasure, how, when

* Dr. Jackson, the present Bishop of Lincoln, was one of Dr. Valpy's pupils at Reading.

the privations of age come on, they seem *natural* to those who have to endure them, and can be better borne than we should before have supposed possible. As for me, I absolutely enjoy the symptoms of growing old, and find the privileges of years thus far out of all proportion to any incipient evil that has occurred as yet. I am somewhat less brisk since I turned fifty than before; but I am abundantly strong and well, and the tranquillizing effects of the sober period I have reached, are very sweet to such a lover of quiet as I am. After this one summer I do not mean to be so desperately overworked any more, as I have been for some years; and I have a strong impression that I shall find, as so many do, that the decline of life is its best part. No fear of any of us being idle, any of us who have health to work, for the world cannot afford a full holiday at present to any of its laborers; and to work for conscience, and not too much for that, and for health, while merging one's personal interests in wider ones, is my ideal of a happy decline. If it takes place in the country, as you and I have chosen that ours should, it is all the sweeter.

I heard a good deal of Mrs. Browning when she was in London, and was glad to find she keeps up her improved condition, frail as she is. I wish she could have recovered from her illness as thoroughly as I have from mine; but her recovery thus far is a great marvel.

Again thanking you for your note and its object, I am, dear Miss Mitford, Very truly yours,

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

MISS DE QUINCEY *to* MISS MITFORD.

Mavis Bush, Lasswade, Sept. 14, 1853.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—What a wretch you will think me! and yet I don't deserve from *you* this opinion. I have only within this last ten minutes had your note given to me, and that not until I had waged war for its possession with papa, who had carried it off into "durance vile," and insisted upon it that there was nothing requiring special notice, that he could tell me all, and such-like stuff, which I thought, with Dogberry, "was most tolerable, and not to be endured;"

so I kept up a sort of starling cry for my letter, and lo! my efforts have been rewarded, for here it is, the kindest and sweetest note possible.

Mr. Payne, I am sorry to say, both for your account and papa's and my youngest sister's of him, neither Florence nor I saw. . . . I was very sorry, too, on another account that we were not at home—viz., that Emily told us that papa was in very bad spirits when Mr. Payne called, and, when he is so, it requires our united efforts to rout him out of them; as it was, Emily said, "He called in all my small remarks, made to suggest things to him, or to cover the gaps like light sovereigns." It was the first time she had ever had to do the honors of the house alone, and consequently she has great misgivings as to whether Mr. Payne will ever run the risk of falling upon the tender mercies of two such wickeds as papa and she again.

Now for our visit to Oxfordshire, and our hoped-for visit to Swallowfield. Emily and I were three weeks in Oxon, and, for the fortnight we were at Lord Valentine's, sufficiently near a railway to make me think a great deal about it, and at one time it was half arranged that some of our friends, the Annesleys, were to take me, but there were two fatal obstacles in the way.

Four days after I reached my native village of Grasmere I was taken so ill that, for the rest of the four weeks I was there, I never left the house till I came home, and it has sent my sister Florence and I home in a perfect *furore* of disgust at everything here, and rabid to go back to Westmoreland to live, for our native air did not do us any damage, though it failed to do all the expected good.

Will you now let us hear how you are; or, better still, send Mr. Payne or Mr. Pearson to *tell* us? All join in kind love, and believe me to remain, my dear Miss Mitford,

Your affectionate friend,

M. De Quincey.

P.S. — Pray for our going to Westmoreland, as nothing but some such convulsion will unearth your letter.

Miss Mitford says that a friend of hers went to spend an evening with De Quincey—evidently Mr. Fields, who edited his works, and took the profits to him to Scotland — and found him "marvellous in conversation; looking like an old beggar, with the manners of a prince." Margaret was De Quincey's eldest daughter, and was delicate in health, but managed his house with great care and economy.* The family had lived for a quarter of a century at Grasmere, in a cottage which had previously been occupied by Wordsworth.

* She married in 1853 Mr. Robert Craig, a manufacturer in Ireland.

CHAPTER XXI.

LETTERS FROM J. G. WHITTIER, J. RUSKIN, TOM TAYLOR, DEAN MILMAN, AND BAYARD TAYLOR.

AMONG the poets honorably mentioned in Miss Mitford's "Recollections of a Literary Life," we find the name of Whittier. She calls him "the most intensely national of American bards." He wrote against slavery and religious intolerance.

J. G. WHITTIER *to* MISS MITFORD.

Amesbury, 1st, 1st mo., 1854.

MY DEAR FRIEND, MARY RUSSELL MITFORD,—Permit me to wish thee a happy New Year! I am quite sure that thousands who have been made happier by thy writings will join with me. I wish thou wouldst come over to America, just to see what a host of friends thou hast made for thyself on this side of the water.

I should long before have answered thy kind note, but for the lassitude and disquiet of illness, which often for weeks together make writing of any kind painful and difficult. I spent the latter part of the summer in the wild hill-country of New Hampshire, and think I am still all the better for the inspiring scenery and pure mountain air. At any rate, I can again use my pen, and write newspaper articles for the *National Era;* and now and then I indulge in a jingle of song, a specimen of which I enclose to thee, which has never been published. I know the *subject* will commend it to thee.

I also enclose two short poems, commemorative of my sojourn in the hill-country. As a specimen of the quieter mood of a rough reformer and controversialist, they may not be wholly without interest.

Our excellent friend, James Fields, announces two books of thine as forthcoming. Shall we have a new series of the "Literary Reminiscences"?

A little volume of poems, under the title of "Passion Flowers," by Julia Howe,* wife of Dr. Howe of Boston, is attracting much attention. I hope thou wilt see it. Ticknor and Fields publish it. It seems to me to have great merit.

My friend Dr. Holmes is lecturing this winter on the English poets—very witty and genial.

We have recently had a delightful visit from Ralph Waldo Emerson. I wish thou wouldst meet him. He is a man not only admired, but *loved.*

I need not tell thee that I should be exceedingly glad to hear from thee. Thy two notes are among my choice treasures.

Believe me, most cordially thy friend,

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

MR. J. RUSKIN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Saturday Evening, April 22, 1854.

DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I have just finished "Atherton," to my great regret, thinking it one of the sweetest things you have ever written, and receiving from it the same kind of refreshment which I do from lying on the grass in spring. My father and mother, and an old friend and I, were talking it over to-day at dinner, and we were agreed that there was an indescribable character about it, in common with all your works—an indescribable perfume and sweetness, as of lily of the valley and honey, utterly unattained by any other writer, be it who he or she may.

I perhaps feel it the more from having read very little lately, except of old books; hardly any poetry even among *them*, but much of dry history. I do not mean *dull* by dry, but dry in the sense of faded leaves, the scent and taste of it being as of frankincense instead of the fresh honey. I am sure that your writings will remain the type of this pecul-

* Mrs. Julia Ward Howe wrote several poems of considerable merit. Dr. Howe was a celebrated philanthropist.

iar character of thought. They have the playfulness and purity of the "Vicar of Wakefield," without the naughtiness of its occasional wit, or the dust of the world's great road on the other side the hedge, as it always is there. I don't know where one can get a PERFECTLY innocent laugh, except with you. All other laughing that I know of, even the best, is either a *little* foolish, and therefore wrong, or a *little* malicious, and therefore wrong too. But I think my five-minutes-long laugh over Jacob Stokes "passing the greater part of his time in the air which was not spent in the water" was absolutely guiltless and delicious; as well as another, softened by a little pity for the hedgehog, over Marigold's behavior to that incomprehensible animal. Landseer has done much for dogs, but not so much as you.

I have not read the succeeding volumes yet. I keep them literally for cordials—the most happy and healing when one is weary. I suppose it is because such thoughts are always floating in your mind that you yourself can bear so much, and yet be happy.

April 23d.—I have had one other feast, however, this Sunday morning in your dear friend's poems — Elizabeth Browning. I have not had my eyes so often wet for these five years. I had no conception of her power before. I can't tell you how wonderful I think them. I have been reading the "Valediction," and the "Years Spinning," and the "Reed," and the "Dead Pan," and "Dead Baby at Florence," and the "Caterina to Camoens"—and all for the first time! I only knew her mystical things—younger, I suppose—before.

Tuesday.—I kept this to put another sheet, but can't keep it longer. Yours gratefully, J. RUSKIN.

MR. TOM TAYLOR *to* MISS MITFORD.

General Board of Health, June 29, 1854.

MY DEAR MADAM,—Your letters, which were preserved in the journals, are still in the volumes where I found them, and I have neither the originals nor copies of them. I did, however, in my editorial capacity, read them with a view to see if they threw light on matters it might be important to

know for my purposes. They increased, if that be possible, my respect for their writer, for they reflected in every turn the kindness and geniality which your published works so abundantly reveal.

"Our Village" is one of the books I have read with most pleasure, and I take most pleasure in remembering. I am sure, had we been contemporaries, we should have been friends. As it is, you have no truer admirer. . . . I regret deeply to hear that your health is so shattered, and I trust that this letter will relieve you from any anxiety that might add to the sufferings of illness on the subject of your letters to Haydon. You would yourself, I think, be astonished to find how little they reveal of that "irritability," which, if it be the characteristic of any class of imaginative writers, should be, above all, that of writers for the stage, as I know by experience.

Your utterances were, above all, womanly and kind, and I do not suppose, even had you seen the letters with the notion that they were to be published, you would have found many lines to blot. Believe me, dear madam, with the deepest sympathy and respect,

Most sincerely yours, TOM TAYLOR.

The family wished Miss Mitford to edit "Haydon's Life," but she excused herself as not being sufficiently conversant with the artistic world. She afterwards considered that Mr. Taylor had "done it admirably," and says, "I suppose there is not in English literature a young man so truly admirable in mind and conduct."

J. RUSKIN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Geneva, July 29, 1854.

MY DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I merely write a single line to tell you how glad I am to hear from your letter to my father that the dramatic works will so soon be published. I am very curious to see them, and I am sure by what you say of them that they will be a delight to us all; also, in my peculiar disposition to general quarrelsomeness with the *public*, I begin to put my feathers up, like a fighting-cock, in the hope

of discovering something especially good which the public have not yet acknowledged. I am sure that what has so much of your own feelings in the woof of it must be *good* in the abstract; but whether good as a *play* is another matter. I wish it was more the custom to write in a dramatic form without that subduing, and chiselling, and decorating down to the dimensions, and up to the sparkle, which is needed for the stage patience and the footlights. I have met with *one* example of this kind of writing which has delighted me beyond measure. You know everything that ever was written, I believe, but in case by accident almost inconceivable you should *not* know Octave Feuillet's "Scenes et Proverbes," I have ordered my bookseller to send it to you instantly, thinking that perhaps you might be refreshed, even in your present time of extreme pain, by the exceeding sweetness of "La Clef d'Or." There is something exceedingly like your own thoughts—and what can I say more?—in one of the scenes of it—that between Suzanne and her babe at the bridge, and between her and her husband when she leaves him settling the accounts of the estate with what he thinks a "flash of *triomphe diabolique*" in her eyes. "Redemption" is also a fine thing, but perhaps a little too painful and exciting for you just now.

I do not want to lose this post and must say good-by. You do not know how much you have done for me in showing me how calamity may be borne.

Ever most respectfully and affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

The following unsigned letter is in the beautifully distinct handwriting of Bayard Taylor.

Bayard Taylor *to* Miss Mitford.

Boston, Aug. 1, 1854.

My dear Miss Mitford,—This morning our kind friend Mr. Fields left at my house your precious little note, which both delighted and pained me.

To know that you are suffering who have done so much to mitigate the sorrows of others, to think that we sit under our

elms at Sudbury, charming away the swift summer hours with "Atherton" and the other tales that "hang thereby," while you, who should be with us to see what happy faces you create three or four thousand miles away from Swallowfield, are lying in anguish on your sick-bed—this made me unhappy, and I wished myself in England, that I might be near you and do personally what I can only poorly do with my pen—that I might express to you, by attention and my cheerful service, how much I feel for you, and what pleasure it would give me to add my own mite to the friendly offices which we must all need sooner or later.

It must be a great consolation to you in your illness that you are *at home in England*, with its wealth of comfort, with all the appliances that soothe the hour of sickness, and among all the abundant kindness native to the English heart. Whatever may have been written or said of Italian sunshine, or the genial air of Provence or Andalusia, England is the best country to be an invalid in. Often have I thought amid the most smiling scenes of southern Europe what a wretched thing it must be to depend on the casual or purchased kindness, and the imperfect household arrangements, say, of Rome, or Nice, or Naples; how much in those or similar places the poor patient must miss the thousand comforts of an English home! And then again it seems to me that the out-of-door and haphazard way of life among those people of the South unfits them to be good nurses. Who could expect in their cold, cheerless palaces, with all their finery and poor furniture, their pictures and brick-paved floors—who could expect the nice beds, the neat service, the noiseless motion of your English domestics? I feel quite sure that there is ne'er a noble house from Turin to Palermo that contains as many means and contrivances to relieve the tedium of a long illness as your own room at Swallowfield.

May I tell you a pleasant little incident in which you are concerned that happened to me a week or two since? At an agreeable place in the country, Sudbury, some twenty miles from Boston, where my sisters go to spend the summer, and I my *Sundays*, there met us by appointment two or three friends, desirous like ourselves of escaping the noisy patriot-

ism and gunpowder of our national holiday, the 4th of July. Well, we sat under the trees, for it was too hot to walk, and there came the usual question of "What is there to read?" Now I had carried "Atherton," the *presented copy*, for which I have to thank you, and as it was a day or two, by Mr. Fields's kind forethought, in advance of the publication, I kept it back until the others should have told their treasures, intending then, with a little vainglory and great confidence, to produce my contribution to the literary stock of the company, and "sair surprise 'em all." So Nelly showed *her* book, and Fanny *hers*, and then *this* novel was brought out, and then *that;* and, when they asked what I had for them, I answered,

"Something better than any of you can boast: I would not exchange my volume for a library of such as yours."

"I would not give you *mine* for it," said a lady, and thereupon a dispute arose.

"Well, end it," quoth I. "As you are a lady, you must have the first show, and then you shall see how 'a plain tale shall put you down.'"

"Let the company judge," replied my pretty rival, and out came—"Atherton!"

There were so many "Ohs!" and "Goodys!" and so much "How did you get it?" and "Where did you get it?" that they almost forgot to ask for mine; but, when at last my "Atherton" came forth, there was a little laugh for the moment, and between the two copies the day went merrily off to the entire exclusion of patriotic crackers. For that very delightful time, my dear Miss Mitford, I must add the thanks of the whole company to my own, and I will leave you to guess who the lady was, for her copy also was a gift from you.

MR. RUSKIN *to* MISS MITFORD.

Denmark Hill, Aug. 7, 1854.

DEAR MISS MITFORD,—I could not answer your kind note when I received it, being fairly laid up at the time in pillows and coverlets, and I am now just leaving home again, and have many things to arrange before half-past ten (it

being now half-past seven), so that I have but time to pack, I hope safely, these two flowers, the ranunculus, the hardiest and highest (and most scornful of all common flower-comforts, such as warmth, fellowship, or good entertainment in the way of board and lodging) of all Alpine plants—a loose stone or two, and a drop of dirty ice-water, being all it wants; and the *soldanella*, of which the enclosed little group is a fair specimen, which is equally distinguished for its hurry to be up in the spring. I shall be happy in thinking that my poor pets, in my exile, have at least the consolation of some share in Miss Mitford's regard. I was delighted to hear of your most enjoyable little trip. I have sent this, however, for safety to Reading. I trust you will now have better weather than hitherto.

I am going to take your advice, and try France for a week or two. My wife desires her most sincere regards (best thanks from me for your kind expressions towards her), and my mother and father beg to join theirs.

Ever, my dear madam, believe me faithfully and respectfully yours, J. Ruskin.

Dean Milman *to* Miss Mitford.

Caulew, Penryn, Cornwall, Aug. 19, 1854.

My dear Miss Mitford,—Your pleasant note has been forwarded to me here; the volume of plays awaits me on my return home, when I shall hope to renew my acquaintance with some old friends, and make some agreeable new ones. I beg you to accept my warm thanks for both.

I speak of your note as pleasant from its calm and Christian love, though I could wish that it gave a better account of your health. You have indeed many, I trust the best, consolations. One, I am sure, you may have—the satisfaction of having for many years given great and blameless pleasure to many readers. You have done great service in your day by awakening a sense of the exquisite beauties of our home scenery, and the delights of quiet rural life. That is what so many may enjoy, if they will enjoy it; and you have taught them how to do so.

I write of those compositions which are peculiarly your

own, without disparaging your higher flights, where you have many rivals. You have done what is allowed to few, struck into a path of your own; and that a very delightful and, in its best sense, very useful one.

I cannot help expressing my friendly wish, and in all this I speak in Mrs. Milman's name as well as my own, for your restoration to some comfort and enjoyment: if it is determined otherwise, you have our earnest good wishes and prayers for better things.

I have heard of you from time to time from our dear friend Harness—a friend, indeed, to all whom he loves. May I beg you also to remember us very kindly to Lady Russell?

Believe me, my dear Miss Mitford, with sincere respect and regard, faithfully yours, H. H. MILMAN.

P.S.—We are on our summer holidays in the west, and hope to see the Land's End next week.

BAYARD TAYLOR *to* MISS MITFORD.

New York, Sept. 15, 1854.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I can scarcely say how much I thank you for your letter, which reached me yesterday. I know how much it must have cost you to write at all, and, if this should not find your health improved, I hope you will not feel bound to exhaust your strength by replying to it. I will still hope that you may be spared to your friends for summers to come; but, if this should not be, the cheerfulness with which you anticipate the great change will sweeten its approach.

I wish I could say something that could cheer the weariness of your illness; but what can I write, except what you must already know—that you have many true friends on this side of the ocean; that many whom you have never seen think of you with esteem and affection, and that their warmest sympathy is with you in your afflictions? If I should never see you again, it will be a happiness to remember that I have seen and known you in your house at Swallowfield. Shall I ever forget that stormy afternoon I passed in your little library? I then hoped that our meeting was but the commencement of an intercourse which I knew I should

value the more the longer it existed; for I looked forward then, as now, to visiting England frequently. Your kindness to a rough stranger like myself made me at once your friend, and I shall never think of you otherwise, my dear Miss Mitford, than with the sincerest friendship and esteem. Stoddard and I speak of you often and involuntarily, as an old and tried friend—so near and familiar the thought of you has become. You will still live thus in our memories when you shall have left the world, in which we must struggle a little while longer.

My work on Africa will be published in a few days, and I will send you a copy by the first opportunity. It may serve to divert the tedium of your imprisonment. I have tried to fix the sunshine of the East on its pages, and perhaps a little may be reflected into the glooms of your English October. It promises to be very successful here, six or seven thousand copies having been ordered before publication. I am busily engaged upon another, to be called "The Lands of the Saracen," embracing my travels in Syria, Asia Minor, Sicily, and Spain. Three volumes in one season. You see I am not idle, although I work somewhat against my will, for the old Oriental indolence returns now and then.

I am glad you like the idea of the Oriental poems. It remains to be seen whether they will be recognized as successful. A poetical fame is usually of slow growth, and circumstances have obliged me to throw my prose in the way of my poetry. I know perfectly well, however, that literary fame must be *waited for*, not sought; that, if I deserve it, I shall surely get it, and, if I don't deserve it, I ought not to wish it.

I have seen nearly all our authors this summer—Irving, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Willis, and Bryant—but they are idling at present. Stoddard and I are working side by side, and trying to keep our early vows. There is happiness in the labor, and we are cheerful and hopeful. Heaven grant, my dear friend, that we may be as fortunate as you when the time comes for us to cease working—that we may look back on our successful achievements, and be surrounded by as many and as faithful friends!

But I fear lest it may tire you to read as well as to write, and that I may be making my letter too long. I will write again soon, if I can say anything to interest you. God bless you! Ever faithfully your friend,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

Bayard Taylor, the well-known, pleasant, and prolific American author, was a most enterprising traveller. His earlier journeys were accompanied "with knapsack and staff," and perhaps one of his most remarkable feats was that of travelling over Europe for two years at an expense of only a hundred pounds. The work above alluded to is "A Journey to Central Africa, or Life and Landscape from Egypt to the Negro Kingdom of the White Nile." He spent a day with Miss Mitford at Swallowfield in 1852.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. DIGBY STARKEY.—CRITIQUES BY MISS EDGEWORTH.—LETTERS FROM DIGBY STARKEY, CARLETON, ELIOT WARBURTON AND LORD ST. GERMANS.—PROPOSED HISTORICAL WORK.—DEATH OF ELIOT WARBURTON.

ONE of those literary friends whom Miss Mitford valued, but had never seen personally, was Mr. Digby Starkey. He was accountant-general in Dublin, and relieved the monotony of his official duties by amateur authorship. He first contributed some short articles to Chambers's series, and afterwards wrote "Anastasia," "The Dole of Malaga," "Tom Twiller—a Romance," "Theoria," and a dramatic poem, bearing the somewhat unpromising title of "Judas."* He also wrote reviews in the *Dublin University Magazine.*

Miss Mitford considered him to be a gifted man, and told a friend that "he was said to be one of the pleasantest men in Dublin," and also that "he was a favorite correspondent of Maria Edgeworth, and, having lived in literary widowerhood since her death, has adopted me as a sort of second wife, a very unworthy one."

Mr. Starkey's acquaintance with Miss Edgeworth seems to have been due to his sister-in-law, Miss Jephson, who was the only person out of her own family whom Maria Edgeworth educated, and who was also one of Miss Mitford's oldest and dearest friends. At Miss Jephson's suggestion he sent Miss Edgeworth a copy of his "Judas," hoping it would meet with her approval, and in the note accompanying the volume he says: "If, as an author, I could suggest a claim to your notice, it could only be found in the circum-

* The following collection of letters, made by him and Miss Jephson, was forwarded to me for publication by Mr. Starkey shortly before his death.

stance of my being an Irishman and hazarding the publication of a literary work in Ireland, both of which, while they are discouraging to my hopes of success with the public, I venture to think may obtain the indulgence of one whose labors have been so eminently patriotic; and who, in advancing the interests and elevating the literature of her country, is not ashamed of receiving back a reflected lustre from the land she herself so enlightens and adorns."

Miss Edgeworth's critique in reply exhibits her character in an amiable light. She always desired to take an optimist view, and to praise wherever it was admissible. Experience had taught her what a loving regard an author has for his work, and, as she probably doubted whether Mr. Starkey would reap any pecuniary reward, her warm heart prompted her to say something that might be some kind of recompense.

She wrote as follows:

Rev. R. Butler's, March 25, 1843.

Mr. Starkey has too much reason to be surprised and offended by my long delay of acknowledgments and thanks for his flattering note and valuable present. But I am just recovering from a severe illness, and till within these few days have not been able to give so much attention to reading as his book demands.

In truth, I was quite overwhelmed by your overestimate, sir, of my opinion. I never was in the habit of reading with a view to criticise; but, on the contrary, always for my own pleasure and advantage lent myself completely to my author to be instructed or amused; or, if in poetry, to be hurried and transported hither and thither at the will and power of his genius. In the present case I am, from my want, my total want, of learning or information upon the subjects of which you treat, peculiarly disqualified for giving you any assistance by my remarks or criticism. . . .

So far as I can judge by the impressions made on myself by many passages in your poem, it is impossible to doubt your claims to high poetic merit, and to that highest kind, the test of genius, *invention*—invention both of new charac-

ter, and of new and appropriate thought, feeling, and incident. The character of Chevah is admirably conceived and ably developed for your main purpose in this drama. I know not of any dramatic incident finer than that of the blind father of Chevah being restored to sight. The scene where he meets his daughter and pours out to her his joy, gratitude, and love for his Saviour, without being aware that he is striking her fatally with remorse and despair, is one of the most beautiful and touching I ever read. Her swooning at her father's feet without a word at the close of his speech is beyond all words eloquent—the best-timed and best-*motived* swoon I ever saw or heard of in poetry or prose. In general I am not fond of swooning, but this of Chevah's commands my pity; and though she is but one of the frail daughters of her namesake, and not quite as good as she should be, yet you have drawn her so as to shield her from disgust, and to make her appear sufficiently attractive in her struggles between virtue and vice, and in her infirmity of passion and weakness, just to answer well your dramatic purpose.

The introduction of love, as a temptation, a motive for Judas to raise him above a mere thief in the first place, as we had always been taught to consider him, was certainly a bold measure. How far justified by Scriptural authority or suggestion we are not bound—at least, I am not called upon—to examine, disdaining, as I most justly and honestly do, all intention or power of learned, much more of Biblical, criticism.

The moral effect assuredly, as well as the dramatic, is *good*—the struggles of remorse, the tortures of conscience, are always moral and salutary for human creatures to behold and believe in. And this drama has powerfully exhibited them, and impressed their reality in the whole character and life and death of Judas. The speech of Satan, "What is hell?" is the finest in your whole drama—sublime! I am sorry you distracted the attention from it and weakened its effect by those horrid prolonged howlings and songs and sayings of the inferior demons: however meant as personifications of evil conscience, they stay too long and talk too much. Length is a fatal enemy to the sublime.

But while thus encouraging the poet, and expressing her admiration for some portions of his work, she cannot conceal her astonishment at the subject he has chosen:

"Why you took Judas under your protection, and made him your hero, I cannot conceive; or why you set yourself such a task beset with difficulties, of which you were so fully aware—as your thirty pages of the detail of these difficulties in your Introduction and your notes prove—I cannot imagine, and, fortunately, it is out of my province to inquire."

Mr. Starkey, in his reply to this letter, gives his reasons for selecting the subject:

"As to the question why I took Judas under my protection, I have an answer—because no one else would have anything to do with him.* It is my constitution and temper to be moved with pity when I observe any one the object of general outcry. I cannot conceive any fellow-mortal being utterly beyond the pale of human sympathy. . . . I could not shut my door upon him when all the world was against him, and he knocked so loud that I was forced to let him in at last." He adds in another place: "Wordsworth, in writing to me, did not hesitate to express his want of sympathy with the story and the personages."

In 1847 Mr. Starkey had Miss Edgeworth's permission to dedicate to her a volume of minor poems. She sends him her opinion of these in the following words:

MISS EDGEWORTH *to* MR. STARKEY.

Edgeworthstown, May 11, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,—I feel my name highly honored by being prefixed to a collection of poems in which there is so much originality and poetic power—in one word, *genius*.

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* Mr. Horne afterwards wrote a miracle-play called "Judas Iscariot," with a similar desire of extenuating Judas's guilt.

"Let me be seen! could I that wish obtain,
All other wishes my own power would gain,"

is a stanza which is put into the mouth of a beauty. A man of your talent has only to feel—let me be known!

Your volume is very well printed, and does credit to your Irish publisher, yet I own that I wish it had appeared in London, to catch the English public eye. I also wish it had another title. "Theoria" is not attractive either to learned or unlearned. But this is all the fault I can find, and it may be a mere caprice of my own. I wish you would send me another copy of your book to Hatch Street for me, with these words written in the title-page—

To Sir John Herschel, Bart.,
From the Author, at the request of
Maria Edgeworth.

I will send up a letter to go with it.

I consider Sir J. Herschel, *though* a philosopher, to be a man of the most enlarged mind and highest genius of any of the many men of abilities with whom I have the pleasure and honor to be acquainted, and I may count him, indeed, as among my friends. I love to give him pleasure, and I know I shall give him much in introducing your book to him.

The poems were read to me by one who can appreciate and do them full justice, and I had exquisite enjoyment in several of them. "The Bankrupt" she could scarcely read, or I hear, without tears—so pathetic, so full and short. The song of "The Pen" is highly poetical and original; so is "Vocal Memnon." The "Poplin Weaver" is beautiful. Look in the Manchester Society's paper (published ages ago), third volume, as well as I recollect—there is a most interesting case in point, not poetical but true, which would show you, and prove to others, that your poetic painting is true to nature, and modestly colored—not so deep a color as these depicted from reality.

I do not like your translations or imitations from the German so well as your originals, and I beg you not to imitate *German* poetry, for I think you have already quite as

much of German genius and sentiment in you as is good for you. Every man of genius should be careful not to

"Leap his fine courser o'er the bounds of taste,"

and you would not learn that sort of discretion from Germans. I am afraid I shall sink in your opinion by this observation, but, sink or swim, I must be sincere.

Your "Words for Music," addressed to a lady going to have her portrait taken, are beautiful; so are your "Sighs and Tears." You have infinite variety in your powers of poetry, and can adopt any style you choose, from Milton to Etherege, Sir W. Raleigh, or Marlowe. But keep your own through all, and believe me very sincerely your obliged and grateful, and truly admiring and severely judging reader,

MARIA EDGEWORTH.

Digby Starkey's action on behalf of Carleton was worthy of all commendation, prompted as it was by the spectacle of a man of talent struggling with the direst poverty. As many persons may not be familiar with the name of this author, I may mention that he was a voluminous novel-writer in the middle of this century. The son of a small farmer living at Clogher in the county of Tyrone, his first attempts were short stories of Irish peasant life, of weddings, wakes, courtships, and faction fights. Those who are fond of studying the early stages of society will mark in these pages many primitive customs and ancient superstitions, while the narrative sparkles with quaint humor, and occasionally affords us glimpses of wild and romantic scenery. Carleton in his youth had a strong literary bias, and, although educated for the priesthood, gave up the prospects of competence which it offered, and went up to Dublin with half-a-crown in his pocket to be one of the hard-worked and ill-paid votaries of the muses. He wrote "Fardorougha, the Miser," "The Fawn of Spring Vale," "Valentine M'Clutchy, the Agent," "The Black Prophet," "The Squanders of Castle Square," and many others. As he moved more in town society, the tone of his writings altered: they lost their original simplicity, and became political. The famine years

accelerated the change, and he now began to portray the tenant as an oppressed man, and to paint the landlord as a drunken profligate. He gives the latter the name of Topertoe, and says that he cared as much for a tenant as for a horse or a dog, "a circumstance which we dare say several of our modern landlords, both resident and absentee, will consider as, on our part, a good-humored stretch of fiction." But it must be admitted that this was part of the strong coloring which the novelist generally adopted, and that, if he represented the landlord as often harsh and extravagant, he added that the tenant was often improvident and dishonest; if he depicted one nobleman as vicious, he contrasted him with another who was refined and honorable.

The persons whom he especially singled out for reprobation were the middlemen and the sub-agents, who themselves belonged to the farming class. His impartiality was so great that, though a Romanist, he occasionally denounced the priests, who, he says, "took more trouble about elections than about preparing their flocks for heaven." "No priest of any creed," he maintains, "should be suffered, unless at the expense of his ears, to take part in, or appear upon the hustings at, an election; he has no right to deliver inflammatory speeches to an ignorant and excitable rabble. There is no greater curse to Ireland than a political firebrand." In his preface to the "Tithe Proctor" he writes: "I have myself been a strong anti-Repealer during my whole life, and, though some of the Young Irelanders are my personal friends, yet none know better than they that I was strenuously opposed to their principles, and have often endeavored to dissuade them from the madness of their undertaking."

Speaking of the Tithe War he says: "The people as they always are, and we fear forever will be, were mere instruments in the hands of a host of lay and clerical agitators, and no argument was left unattempted or unurged to hound them on to the destruction of the Establishment. The virtues of passive resistance were inculcated and preached." These words, viewed by later lights, seem almost prophetic!

The following letter was written by Mr. Starkey on behalf of Carleton:

MR. STARKEY *to* MISS EDGEWORTH.

Dublin, July 6, 1847.

MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,—By a strange coincidence I received from Mr. Carleton, on the very day on which your valuable letter reached me, a note in which he urged upon me the execution of the task I had undertaken for him—to procure, if possible, "the honored and great name of Maria Edgeworth" to his memorial. He had in fact become apprehensive that I might have forgotten him or you, neither of which circumstances were likely to happen.

I have not yet seen him to read to him the invaluable testimonial you have so generously written for him, which must produce the most powerful effect with the Government, if you allow me to make use of it by sending it to Lord John Russell.

I am disposed to think that the pension list for the present may be full, from the fact of two considerable annuities having been lately granted: one to the excellent Father Mathew, the other to the family of the late Dr. Chalmers; but Carleton's claim, urged and backed as it now is, cannot ultimately be overlooked.

Your exertions for the circulation of my little volume excite my gratitude in no small degree. Sir John Herschel's literary qualifications had been already known to me through our common friend, Sir William Hamilton, to whom I have addressed one of my sonnets in "Theoria," having reference to two sonnets of his (Sir W. H.'s) written at Sir J. Herschel's residence in England. Of his fame as a philosopher the whole world is cognizant. These two men were together last week at Oxford. . . .

MR. STARKEY *to* MISS EDGEWORTH.

July 16, 1847.

MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,—I beg to send you the memorial on behalf of Mr. Carleton, which it is his ardent wish you should sign. . . .

I never saw so strong an impression of gratified feeling in my life in *any one* as he evinced on my reading to him your

letter. He really could not find words to convey his emotions, and at last declared that he was sufficiently repaid for all the trials and troubles which had made him an author.

What an enviable power your genius gives you of administering delight! When I saw poor Carleton's face glowing with pride and exultation, I felt that the triumph was yours, and of no ordinary degree.

In October, 1847, Miss Edgeworth had consented to be godmother to Mr. Starkey's son, and he wrote her as follows upon this occasion:

MR. STARKEY *to* MISS EDGEWORTH.

Four Courts, Dublin, Oct. 28, 1847.

MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,—The truly kind and flattering way in which you have accepted the office of sponsor to our little boy has enhanced the honor you have done us by consenting to our wishes, and my best wish for my son is that he may prove in life worthy of the great name designed for him.

Your message to your *gossip*, the Attorney-General, I delivered to him, and he begs leave through me to express the gratification he feels in making such an acquaintance. I have gone beyond your instructions, and delivered a similar message to your other gossip, Mr. Mackinnon, a connection of ours, and an admirer, as well as a cultivator, of literature. You will find honorable mention of him in Lockhart's "Life of Sir Walter Scott," he (Sir W.) having met him in the Hebrides many years ago, on *his own* island of Skye. Mr. Mackinnon is now classed amongst the "literary legislators" of the day, and his works on public opinion and civilization certainly entitle him to the former part of the description, though I think his efforts for the establishment of certain economic reforms are the truest grounds of his fame. I must transcribe a portion of his letter: "I feel proud of being placed in juxtaposition with such names as the Attorney-General of Ireland and Miss Edgeworth, to whom I beg you will offer my best compliments and acknowledgments. I will seize the opportunity of the introduction you have mutually

given to call upon both my co-sponsors whenever I hear they are likely to be in town."

This I know to be no idle compliment; at his hospitable mansion in Hyde Park Place I have met many distinguished persons: Miss Porter, Lady Cork, Disraeli, Miss Pardoe, etc.

Let me now say a word about the letter you so kindly transcribed for me from that great man, Sir J. Herschel. It came upon me by surprise. I scarcely thought that one so taxed as to every moment of time could or would have found leisure to speak of "Theoria." . . . My reward is renewed every time I hear that a man like this has felt what I have written. And, as to Sir J. H.'s poetical abilities, I had heard enough from my friend, Sir W. Hamilton, to satisfy me of his powers both of judgment and performance.

The next letter, dated June 26, 1848, is on the same subject.

MR. STARKEY *to* MISS EDGEWORTH.

MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,—Our exertions have been successful, and Carleton is on the pension list for £200 a year. I hope and believe that he feels, as I do, that his good fortune is in a great measure due to *your* strong and generous advocacy of his claims, both in the body of the memorial, and in the letter to me which accompanied the memorial to Lord John Russell.

I must confess, when I found Carleton's name published as that of a feuilletoniste in the *Irish Tribune*,* I gave him up for lost. This paper is only second to the *Irish Felon* in anti-English spirit, and I feared that Lord Clarendon might insist on connecting Carleton with the politics of the paper. Under this apprehension, I wrote to Lord C——, and represented to him not only the helpless state in which an author who writes for bread is placed, when that bread is held out by a "felon" on one hand and refused by the loyal subject on the other, but also the importance of detaching a

* A national or Fenian newspaper. It only lived through five numbers, and Carleton only wrote in it three chapters of "The Evil Eye," which was not a political story.

writer of Carleton's powers, who can affect the middle classes so widely, from a connection which would necessitate the application of those powers to a dangerous purpose, and of rendering him, first, independent to follow the bent of his own inclinations, and secondly, inclined, from the generosity of his own nature and the liberality of government, to employ his pen in the illustration of the social virtues and the cause of order.

The result was as I have told you: Lord Clarendon at once forwarded Mr. Carleton's case to Lord John Russell (this was about three weeks ago), rather a reminder of the memorial than anything else, and on Friday last arrived a letter announcing the glad tidings. Next day a letter from Lord John Russell conveyed the same intelligence in a highly flattering way; this day Carleton has had a cordial shake of the hand from Lord Clarendon; and this day, too, comes the news that the ministry are out!

Mr. Starkey afterwards wrote political works under the pseudonym of "Menenius," and sent one of them anonymously to Miss Edgeworth, who in acknowledgment of it wrote:

MISS EDGEWORTH *to* MR. STARKEY.

Edgeworthstone, Jan. 9, 1849.

ADMIRABLE MENENIUS,—I thank you for sending me your "Luck and Loyalty"—a catching title, but it needs no title. Its own merit will fix and hold its station in our permanent literature—fine literature and moral literature fit for the highest, and yet adapted to the comprehension of the least cultivated in the land.

The queen and her lamp and her lattice will in full light outlive, outshine, and bear comparison unimpaired with Burke's "brightest vision that ever lighted upon earth."

As much has been said as possible of the example of France to deter from disloyalty, anarchy, and national ruin. Now, if ever, let nations learn by experience—if ever people, individually or collectively, did learn by experience of others, it must be when brought home so close and warm to their own consciences and bosoms.

I rejoice that Menenius resolves to write no more under that name. He has not only that which has been called the greatest art, "the art to blot," but the still more difficult one, the art, the power, to stop; and to stop to rest, self-sustained, on the pleasurable pre-eminence with head cool and heart warm.

Miss Mitford had from her early youth read Miss Edgeworth's works, and she thought that authoress had done more good to the world than any writer since the days of Addison. "She shoots at folly as it flies, and seldom misses her aim." The tiresome parts of her works she attributed to her "prosing father." Miss Mitford was never acquainted with her, but she once met her at an assembly, and thought her the smallest woman she ever saw. She often heard of her through Mrs. Hofland, who corresponded with both authoresses.

Another remarkable person who read and admired "Menenius's" writings was Eliot Warburton. This gifted author was at the time contemplating the production of a work upon Ireland, and he conceived that "Menenius" could render him efficient assistance; accordingly he wrote:

ELIOT WARBURTON *to* MR. STARKEY.

Rhwlas, Machwylleth, North Wales, July 11, 1850.

SIR,—I presume to identify you with the author of an anonymous publication. "A light that is set upon a hill cannot be hid," and I do not scruple to say that you have thrown more light, and truer light, on the actual position of your country than any of her sons have ever done—at least in my humble opinion.

Having read the tracts of "Menenius" with cordial admiration, and, I hope, with appreciation, I desire very much to be known to their author. If it be a liberty I am taking in thus addressing him, I at least prove my belief in his worth by the confidence I venture to place in him.

I have some intention of embarking in a literary undertaking connected with the history of Ireland, in which I should greatly desire to have the assistance of so able and

eloquent (by no means synonymous terms) a writer as "Menenius." My views in the above history would, I hope, be patriotic, but (I am an Irish landlord) profit would also be a consideration.

If "Menenius" will do me the honor to write to me, I will explain myself further.

His very obedient servant,

ELIOT WARBURTON.

Mr. Starkey wrote to express his willingness to co-operate in the proposed work, and Eliot Warburton, in a second letter, developed his scheme more completely.

ELIOT WARBURTON *to* MR. STARKEY.

Rhwlas, Machwylleth, North Wales, July 22, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am very much gratified by the contents and kind tone of your letter, and congratulate myself on having obtained such an ally.

The history of Ireland has not only been *ill*-written, but so *repulsively* written by all those who have attempted the subject, that the very title would now be unpopular. At the same time, among the clouds that are clearing away, those from her history should be dispersed, as far as the patriot can do it. I propose a "Viceregal Dynasty of Ireland—Personal and Historical," or some such title. I think there is a healthy appetite—though too easily satisfied—in this country for obtaining information, especially when gilded by novelty and originality. From what I already know of the ante-Norman and Plantagenet periods of Ireland's history it appears to me that a picturesque and striking sketch might be made of it—say half an octavo volume, the other half to run up to the deposition of that caitiff, James II. I think I could manage so far with a little assistance.

What I would propose to you would be the continuance to Lord Clarendon's reign. As he is a personal and kind friend of mine, I should like to have a "turn" at him as to his personal career, which my acquaintance with his family would enable me to do.

You will see that I have left you by far the most arduous

part of the work, the post of honor. But, from your peculiar powers, you are far better able to grapple with the difficulties that will beset you. Your manly and nervous style will never be degraded into the pettiness of biography, while you will be able to appreciate and *project* with strong relief what is noble in character and relevant in politics.

I propose two moderate octavo volumes, with portraits of King John and Lord Clarendon as first and last of the mock dynasty; also a map of ante-Norman Ireland, and of Ireland as she now is. Many English readers could more easily follow a narrative of operations in Afghanistan than in Connaught.

There is one matter which I regret. I should have been very glad to have published an Irish work in Ireland, and I can understand that Mr. Hodges has some valuable MSS. But, alas! London is the only remunerative market. I have a few valuable MSS. intrusted to me, but of course it is important to obtain as many as possible relating to the Volunteer, the Rebellion, the Union, and the Catholic Emancipation periods. ELIOT WARBURTON.

In a letter dated July 29, 1850, after further discussing the proposed work, he adds:

"And here I may observe, *en parenthèse*, with regard to politics—I hate the very word—that hereditarily a Tory, and by reading and observation a good deal chastened in that creed, I shall endeavor to write my part of Ireland in the spirit of the old song—

> 'I ask not be ye Whig or Tory,
> For Commonwealth or Right Divine,
> Say, dear to you is England's glory?
> Then—gie's a hand o' thine.'

Your own aphorism is more practical, and as expressive of my ambition—'truth in facts, and philosophy in deduction.'

"As to unity of style, that is impossible. I think the variety will be acceptable in every way to the reader. You will enter on a new era at a time when history becomes more important and earnest. It is only just to your fame that your style should be perceived and appreciated. I can

say but little for myself in other respects, but I can faithfully assert that you will find in me no jealous compeer, nor among your readers a more hearty appreciator.

"I think Macaulay is a better model for us than either Campbell or Strickland. Generally, it cannot be denied that our viceroys were not men of leading mind, and too often were only shelved into their high power. We must rather reverse the pretty saying—

> 'They're the wreath of pearl, and I
> Am but the cord on which they lie.'

We may string our history on them, I think, giving such matters, even of the most famous, as may make ours a useful book of reference, and only entering into particulars of such lives as interest the world at large. I think Moore's first volume is very pleasant reading for a class (of whom I am one), but his last three are—!"

Warburton concludes this letter by inviting Starkey to pay him a visit in Wales, and adds:

"I hope you are an angler, and that by the 24th prox. we shall have some pretty good salmon-fishing."

Writing again about their literary project on August 23, he says:

"I think we should be sure of full reviews under any circumstances, and as I know most of our cabinet ministers, we should have a good chance of being talked about (I mean our book would) among public men and in Parliament, which is the best of puff."

On the 29th of August, 1850, we find him still expecting Mr. Starkey on a visit. He writes of their work:

"The difficulties you think of *are* difficulties, and such as strike the fire out of flint, and illumine the page that a dull author would leave dark. But of this and all other such things we can talk upon a sunny bench that overlooks the valley of the Dovy. I hope you can smoke a pipe of Latakia.

"You will kindly remember that we are *en bivouac*, and can only offer mountain fare and cottage accommodation."

On September 16 he writes to acknowledge Starkey's sending him his collection of poems.

"I give you a thousand thanks for your poems, in my wife's name and my own. I have as yet only glanced at them, and filled a breakfast-table's eyes with the touching stanzas on the 'Poplin Weaver.' I keep the fuller perusal for a *bonne bouche* for leisure hours, now few and far between."

In November we find them making slow progress with their "magnum opus," to which Warburton says he cannot devote his whole attention. He encloses the following letter from Lord St. Germans:

LORD ST. GERMANS *to* ELIOT WARBURTON.

Dover Street, Nov. 25, 1850.

MY DEAR MR. WARBURTON,—I received a letter this morning from Lord Braybrooke, from which the following is an extract:

"None of the papers relating to Lord Cornwallis's official connection with Ireland ever came into my hands, nor has anybody been able to tell me what has become of them. The late Lord Sydney seemed to think that Lord Cornwallis was too cautious a man to leave behind him any record of the measures by which the Union was brought about, and always fancied that he had destroyed those papers.

"I had intended to put some questions about them to Sir Edward Littledale (Lord's C.'s private secretary), but he died long ago, and before I had any opportunity of applying to him.

"Poor Charles Wynn, who was at the Home Office at the time of the Union, told me that if Lord Cornwallis's papers were extant they would be the most curious records ever collected. He spoke of those which related to Ireland."

It is a great disappointment to me to find that the papers in question are not only not in Lord Braybrooke's posses-

sion, but that they are probably not even in existence. I had flattered myself that I should be able to procure for you some very valuable materials for your work. I knew that Lord Cornwallis's Indian papers were at Audley End, and I thought that his Irish ones were there also.

Believe me, with best wishes for the success of your undertaking, always yours very faithfully, ST. GERMANS.

Lord St. Germans also wrote expressing his approval of Mr. Starkey's poems, which Warburton seems to have sent him.

Unhappily for the authors and the public, the proposed history of the Irish Viceroys was not destined to appear. The publishers did not think it would prove remunerative. Colburn wrote to say that he did not consider that the work would be *generally* attractive. "The Irish," he observes, "spend less on books than the Scotch, and English people with few exceptions do not take any real interest in the subject of Ireland."

When the next letter was written, the undertaking was practically abandoned.

ELIOT WARBURTON *to* MR. STARKEY.

11 Rutland Gate, Jan. 2, 1851.

MY DEAR STARKEY,—Your letter was a great relief to my mind. It will be a still greater one when I hear that you have mentioned to Lord Clarendon that our joint emprise is for the present at an end. All historic men like to have their times written of by fair and not antagonistic men.

By all means I would have you persevere as you have begun. The modern history of Ireland is still to be written, and *must find* readers.

I wish you were here to dine to-day—Lytton Bulwer and Eothen dine with us.

In May we find Mr. Warburton inviting Mr. Starkey to pay him a visit near Melrose, in Scotland, and on December 15 he writes from the Athenæum:

"I am grieved to hear of your hope deferred, and am gratified by your eloquent *résumé* of American travellabilia. As to the former, if the X is a true man, it must be all right with you. If he be not, the sooner your golden faith is turned into another channel the better.

"My western wanderings are in a most undefined embryoism just now. At all events, I shall not leave England until the end of this year, or the second month of the next.

"It is quite true that the awful array of writers you suggest is before me in the field—but where are they not? 'Pereant qui nostra ante nos dixerint!' Thanks, however, to the illiterateness and bad memory of the world, the *antedixerints* are not much in the way.

"I came here for the last few days of the Exhibition. Paxton being a friend of mine, I was enabled to see the close of the mighty pageant to-day. It died a Christian's death in prayers and external dreariness."

Shortly after this Warburton was staying with Bulwer Lytton at Knebworth, and on the 1st of January he wrote a hasty line to say that he was off next day for the West Indies "for three or four months' cruise."

He had been selected by the Atlantic and Pacific Junction Company to come to a friendly understanding with the tribes of Indians inhabiting the Isthmus of Darien, and it was his intention also to obtain some information as to the climate, resources, and topography of that region. He accordingly took a passage on board the *Amazon*—a splendid vessel—sister-ship to the *Demara*, which, equally ill-starred, was wrecked in the Avon immediately after she had been launched.

Some of the details of the dreadful sequel may be interesting:

"The *Amazon* left her moorings on Friday, January the 2d. Owing to the heated state of the new engines, the ship was stopped off Portland Bill on Friday night, and again on Saturday. On the latter occasion one of the passengers, a Mr. Nielson, expressed alarm at the heat of the beams near the funnel. He heard that the partition of the

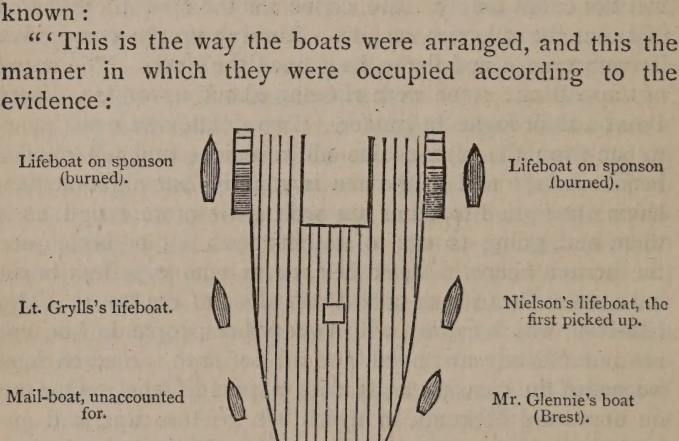
grease-room, where tow and tallow were stored, was very hot, and also the wood near the steam-chest. From this and the screaming of the machinery he concluded that there was some uneven bearing. They were then about a hundred miles beyond Scilly. At a quarter before one on Sunday morning smoke was seen issuing from the hatchway on the fore-side of the foremost funnel. The hose was brought to play, but without effect, and shortly afterwards the fire burst forth. The sea was rough, and as the wind was blowing half a gale from the S.W. the flames were driven aft. It was impossible to stop the engines, but some determined men at the helm turned her before the wind, a change which swept off the unfortunate people in the bow.

"The vessel now flew along at great speed like a sheet of fire, the pinewood crackling with deafening noise. Mr. Kilkelly, one of the survivors, told my friend Mr. Harrison that he had been asleep, and on awaking was surprised to find the cabin empty. He called for the steward, and was told that the ship was on fire. Rushing up the companion through smoke and flame, he gained the deck. The scene was appalling: some were running about screaming, others were on their knees in prayer. Two gentlemen came panting up from the after-cabins all in flames, and fell on the deck. A lady and gentleman in nothing but night-clothes, which were on fire, came up with their arms round each other, and, going to one of the hatches, fell together into the furnace below. Meanwhile, those who were less burnt and more calm tried to avail themselves of the boats. The mail-boat was let down with twenty-five people in her, but was immediately swamped, and all perished. Sixteen men succeeded in clearing away with a port lifeboat. One of the starboard lifeboats, in which Mr. Nielson was, and another boat, apparently a cutter, which Miss Smith courageously entered, also got safely off. As the pinnace was being lowered, a sea struck her and unhooked the bow-tackle; the fore end fell down, and all but two men were precipitated into the sea. Afterwards they righted the boat. This seems to have been that in which Mr. Glennie was saved.

Thus four boats out of the nine got off. The flames from the ship made it as light as day, and they could from the boats even see the blisters on the faces of the men on deck. Just at this time a Dutch galliot passed, but such was the noise of the fire and of the lashing waves that the crew could not hear the shouts of the men in the port lifeboat, though they took up Miss Smith's and Mr. Glennie's boats. Afterwards the engines of the *Amazon* stopped; at four o'clock A.M. the masts fell overboard; at five the magazine exploded, scattering the embers to a great distance, and twenty minutes afterwards the ship sank with her funnels red-hot. The two lifeboats were eventually saved, but out of one hundred and sixty-three persons on board the ship one hundred and seventeen perished.

"Among the papers sent me by Mr. Starkey I find the following interesting account, written by the Rev. Acton Warburton soon after the intelligence of the loss of the *Amazon* arrived, and while the fate of his brother was unknown:

"'This is the way the boats were arranged, and this the manner in which they were occupied according to the evidence:


Lifeboat on sponson (burned).
Lifeboat on sponson (burned).
Lt. Grylls's lifeboat.
Nielson's lifeboat, the first picked up.
Mail-boat, unaccounted for.
Mr. Glennie's boat (Brest).
Miss Smith's boat (Brest).
Gig, unaccounted for, supposed stove in—Glennie says not.
Dingey.

"'Glennie's evidence is the most reliable. He was perfectly calm, and everything he has stated has been remark-

ably confirmed by events. Read his letter. When he was dropping down into his boat he saw Eliot, completely dressed, walking towards the starboard sponson lifeboat, which somebody had said was burning; but Glennie is not sure that it was. When Glennie reached the boat the steamer was going fast, and he was swept away about two hundred yards in the space of a minute or two. He then looked again, and saw Eliot had returned, and was standing beside the captain. He says that he was perfectly collected, and his motions indicated self-command, and a power to make any effort for his own safety. Thank God he was seen where we knew he would be, in the place and attitude of the brave! We all knew that, as long as there was woman or child, or indeed man, to be saved, he would not think of himself.

"'Glennie's attention was then directed to his own boat, and when he again looked at the steamer, after the lapse of half an hour, there was nobody on the main deck. . . . He mentioned that he had pulled benches aft for the purpose of making a raft, and he had no doubt the captain and Eliot, if everything else failed, would have made one. I saw two of these benches, which had been picked up off the Lizard Point and brought to London Bridge. They were tied back to back to make a raft. Glennie recognized them as having been on the deck of the *Amazon*, and observed that their having been tied together showed his views were right as to there being time enough to act between the time he left and the period when the deck became untenable. Besides the bark, there were several vessels on the course that day (Sunday) which might have picked them up, and, if heavily insured and outward bound, would not have turned back, as we see in the case of the last people found, who were a day on board a galliot, and obliged to bribe the captain to put back to England.

"'Eliot Warburton was last seen standing beside the man at the helm, with his arms folded.'"

On hearing of this dreadful disaster, Mr. Starkey wrote on the 28th of January to Mr. Colburn:

"Good God, sir! can it be possible? Is our beloved friend, Eliot Warburton, of whom I wrote to you but yesterday, indeed among the number of the lost in the *Amazon?*

"I am scarcely able to write, or even to think, since hearing even the suspicion of such a calamity.

"His repeated and affectionate offers of kindness on my behalf, who am but a comparatively new acquaintance, I could not attempt to enumerate. He addressed me from a distance—asked me to go to him, and acted to me as a brother—having only read some minor publications of mine. I have letters of his, which I treasured as memorials of our intercourse and of his rich generosity even before I knew that I was to consider them as *all* I should have to treasure up.

"Oh, that I were a Milton as truly as he was a Lycidas! He should not want an elegy—

'Sunk as he is beneath the watery floor.'"

Miss Mitford writes: "Poor Warburton! I hear much of him from my friend, a neighbor of the Russells, whose eldest son was the R. of the 'Crescent and the Cross.' He is since dead. They speak of Mr. Warburton in the very highest terms."

CHAPTER XXIII.

MISS JEPHSON.—LETTERS FROM MISS JEPHSON, AND FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY.

THE earliest letter that I have seen from Miss Mitford to Miss Jephson is dated 1824, but the tone of it shows that their friendship was not then new. Miss Mitford says that she was one of the most cultivated women that she had ever known, with a sweetness and simplicity of character and charm of mind and manner which made one forget how clever she was. She was twenty-seven in 1829, and Miss Mitford, while disclaiming all desire for match-making, told her old and valued friend, Mr. Harness, that she would make him a good wife. Miss Jephson was a grandniece of Jephson the dramatist, and suggested to Miss Mitford that she should edit and republish his plays, together with his *jeux d'esprit* and letters. When Miss Jephson was staying near her with Lady Sunderland and Miss Malone—the sister of Edmund Malone, the Shakespearian—she found a number of Mr. Jephson's letters among Malone's papers, and among them a few containing an amusing quarrel between Jephson and Horace Walpole.

The first letter from Miss Mitford to Miss Jephson in Mr. Starkey's collection is undated, but seems to have been written in 1831. After referring to her plays, "Inez de Castro" and "Charles I.," she proceeds to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of Mr. Thomas Hope:

"You will see that literature and everybody, above all his friends, have had a great loss in Thomas Hope. He had been very ill, and was getting better, but went out, in an open carriage, in one of those fogs, caught cold, and applied the remedies which an inflammation on the chest rendered necessary. Of all the persons I ever knew, I think he was

the most delightful. There was a quick, glancing, delicate wit in his conversation such as I never heard before—it came sparkling in, checkering his grave sense like the sunbeams in a forest. He had also (what all people of any value have) great truth and exactness of observation, and said the wisest things in the simplest manner. Above all, there was about him a little tinge of shyness, a modesty, a real and genuine diffidence, most singular and most charming in a man of his station, his fortune, and his fame. Everybody knows the noble things he used to do—but he was as careful not to give pain as he was earnest to confer happiness, and perhaps this humbler and easier virtue is the rarer of the two. People called him ugly, and a detestable French artist painted him and his wife, as I dare say you have heard, as 'La Belle et la Bête.' To me he seemed almost handsome. He was very much underhung, which gave a lion-like look to the lower part of his face, but he had a good Shakespearian pile of forehead, an expression of benevolence and intellect, and the air and bearing of a man of the highest distinction. He was not, I find, so rich as has been thought, in spite of his magnificent house in Duchess Street, the very temple of art, where Mrs. Hope's parties united all that was most distinguished in rank, talent, and literature; and of his still more beautiful villa at Deepdene, where princes of all nations used to take up their abode for weeks together. All was accomplished by the most admirable system of order, a large and liberal economy. He knew to a fraction the expense of every day; nothing ever approached the exactness of his establishment—a strange union with such magnificence and such taste: perhaps the Dutch blood might have some influence. He has two brothers, without children, one of whom has had sixty thousand a year for the last twenty years, and not spent above a few hundreds, so that the children (three sons) will probably be immensely rich. The favorite and loveliest child, his feelings on the loss of whom prompted the last exquisite half-volume of 'Anastasius,' is buried in the graveyard at Deepdene, in a spot consecrated purposely for his mausoleum. I do not know where he himself has been interred. I may probably have told you of

him a good deal before, dearest, but it is, I believe, the sort of authentic account of celebrated people which you like to receive. Miss Edgeworth knew him well, but they did not take to each other. He was very kind to me, chiefly because I was an old favorite friend of his favorite friend.

"I am reading the second volume of Moore's 'Life of Byron,' and I must say that I do think a great deal of it ought to have been omitted."

Miss Mitford's acquaintance with Mr. Starkey commenced in the winter of 1852. From the following reply it appears that he first wrote to her to express his appreciation of her "Recollections of a Literary Life," then recently published.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

Feb. 9, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—I cannot address as a stranger one whom in right of dear Emily Jephson, and I will venture to say in his own, I have learnt to regard as a friend. You can hardly fancy how much pleasure your charming letter has given me, not merely from its own kindness to my book, but because it comes to convince me, with other indications of the same nature, that even to such as you that book has been suggestive, has drawn attention to things that have interested me, and to writers neglected if not forgotten. Your account of Thomas Davis was peculiarly interesting to me. Nobody can imagine how little he is known in England. Except two or three young barristers, who became acquainted with him through his edition of Curran, I never met with anybody who had even heard the name. I first met with it in Duffy's Irish Library, and have since had frequent messages from a young lady to whom he was engaged, sent to me through a correspondent of hers and mine. I know no one whose writings, full as they are of youthful fervor, show more maturity than those of Thomas Davis. They are quite free from the imputed national faults. I agree with you that he was spared much evil, though for my own part, looking at the matter merely as an Englishwoman, and therefore ignorantly, I confess I think that government might have entered

into some agreement after sentences by which such men as John Mitchell and Smith O'Brien and poor young Meagher might have been allowed to pass their days as exiles in America, instead of languishing as convicts in a penal colony.

With regard to Mr. Praed you are probably right: the very finish and beauty of those trifles was against a higher success. His brother furnished me with a great number of unpublished MSS., chiefly political satires, admirable for point and pleasantry, and more than impartial, since I think the attacks made upon his party were the most numerous. I might have printed them all if I liked, since they were put into my hands to work my will with; but, although many perhaps are passed away, one is never sure in such cases of not giving pain in some quarter, and therefore I returned the poems without even taking copies. It is very likely that all he left will be collected and published now, for I see a cheap edition of "Holcroft's Memoirs" advertised, and I hear of a forthcoming collection of Frere, whose works, long out of print, are scarcely to be obtained by the second-hand booksellers.

The specimen you have sent me of "Prince" is exquisite. I have commissioned a friend in London to look for his poems. Did you ever meet with some by a Dorsetshire school-master? I have heard two or three persons speak of them, but I believe they are in that west country *patois* which wants the charm of association that binds me to the Doric of Burns and Motherwell. One of my early favorites was Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd;" in that I never found the difficulties that beset the early readers of the Waverley novels, or even of Sir Walter Scott's poetry. By the way, I have looked through scores of volumes without being able to find what Scott calls the best comic ballad in any language —James V.'s "We'll gae nae mair a-roving." The "Gaberlunzie Man," by the same royal author, is in "Percy," but nowhere can I find its companion. After looking in vain through all the old collections, I sent for Chambers's collection of popular Scottish poems, chiefly comic, but, although there are some curious illustrations of Edinburgh manners

towards the end of the last century, there is a lack of what I expected. After all, I should have done better to write to William Chambers himself, whom I know well and esteem much.* He is one of the best illustrators of self-educated men. His wife told me that for three months, when a lad of eighteen or nineteen, he had set his heart upon a little portable printing-press exposed in a broker's window in Edinburgh for the price of eight shillings and ninepence; every night he walked half a mile round to see if the bargain had been caught up by another. Two or three times he had nearly collected the sum, but some imperative claim of want, or duty, or kindness interfered. At last he scraped the money together and became possessed of the treasure. My heart warmed to both wife and husband as they told me this story—lady and gentleman as both are in heart, manner, and acquirements.

Thank you for telling me that story of Byron. Strange that there should be another plagiarism after the wholesale theft of Werner, which could not be unconscious. I am very indulgent towards such borrowings in general, knowing how extraordinary is the manner in which memory and invention are sometimes mixed up, especially where the first faculty is weak. With me it is singularly so, and for years I was tormented by constant fear that every line of tragedy less bad than the next was stolen from my betters. It was a miserable feeling. At last I outwrote it, but I would not answer for its not reviving now, if I had not, luckily, outlived the power of writing verse at all.

Forgive this long, straggling letter, dear Mr. Starkey. It will at least prove my reliance upon your indulgence. Do you never come to London? And, if you do, cannot you contrive to give me a day? Many people take a return-ticket, and put up with my homely fare, and spend the afternoon in my poor cottage. One day's notice, to make sure of not missing you, would be plenty.

Ever very faithfully yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

* In the *Edinburgh Journal* for January 28, 1882, he gives an interesting account of some of his visits to Miss Mitford.

A slip of paper inside this letter contains the following:

What you say of Leigh Hunt reminds me of a curious circumstance not a little illustrative of the man. I know none of the family, but a friend of mine brought a pretty granddaughter of his, who had almost wholly lived with him, a girl of sixteen, to pass the day. We took a country walk, and in part of a farm-house Miss Hunt was most astonished and puzzled by an object the most natural and the most familiar. She had never seen a plough! And this was the constant inmate, the favorite grandchild of the lover of nature! This is what prevents his being a poet, dear Mr. Starkey: not his being ignorant of the commonest rural objects, but his affecting to be familiar with them—in a word, his want of truth. From what I hear, the chief sins of his life have been eternal mendicancy. His prose gives me no pleasure, but the processional power of the story of "Rimini" is a thing to wonder at. He might have been near to Chaucer, if he had only been true. In your and Milton's, for better words, "If his life had been a poem." Casting aside, of course, a far too large part of his works, the greatest living poet seems to me to be Béranger. I know no one who unites such impulse, such finish, and such truth.

MISS JEPHSON* *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

Feb. 12, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—Yesterday came one of dear Miss Mitford's closely written, many-leaved letters, which she begins by saying, "how *very*, VERY glad she shall always be to hear from Mr. Starkey."

Gift-books and letters come every day, pouring in two, three, four at a time, she says, in consequence of her book. Of the books, the most striking is a little volume of poems, bearing the name (not, she believes, the true name) of Mary Maynard—a friend of John Ruskin. Of this book she speaks very highly, and fancies that the assumed name conceals high rank. Besides books and letters, roses arrive, two seed-

* Some of Miss Mitford's letters to Miss Jephson are in the "Life of Mary Russell Mitford."

lings called "Miss Mitford," and two the "Swallowfield." She has, from Hertfordshire nurseries, no less than twelve climbing roses for the front of her house. She says that all the choicest and best English and French roses are raised in Hertfordshire. Last evening, during a drive to Cloyne with Mrs. Halloran, we talked of Miss Mitford's book—and her prize in the lottery reminded Mrs. H. of a marvellous and, I am sure, a true history, which I must tell you. About thirty years ago a Mr. Armstrong, the son of a Presbyterian minister, dreamed three times that he had gained a prize of £20,000 in the lottery, and each time the number of the ticket was revealed to him. After the third dream he felt so certain that he should obtain the prize that he resolved (though very poor at the time) to purchase a ticket; but, knowing that his parents would object to his spending so much money on what would probably prove to be a delusion, he pawned some things of his own, and, wishing not to be known when buying the ticket, he called himself Mr. Johnson, his father's Christian name being John. One doubt troubled him. He was sure that he had dreamed of the *same* number *two* of the nights, but did not distinctly remember what number he had thought of on the second night. On that night he had slept at an inn, and, fearing after his dream that he should forget the number of the ticket, he had risen from his bed, and with a pencil had written on the wall the lucky number. To that inn he resolved to go, half fearing, however, that the figures would be erased. But there he found them, corresponding exactly with those of which he had dreamed before. Now he felt secure; hope changed almost to certainty, and he wrote before the lottery was drawn to his father and to his sisters letters informing them of his good fortune, which were to be put into the post-office when the prize became his own. And the prize did become his—a £20,000 prize—and Mrs. Halloran, then at Cork, and living within a few doors of one of his sisters, saw the letter which announced the good news on the day on which it arrived. This Mr. Armstrong is now living in Dublin, in Eccles Street, and Mrs. Halloran (when I said Miss Mitford should be told the story) said that she would ask her daughter, Mrs. Chatterton, to call on him for

further particulars; but I think all that can be interesting is known. Mr. Armstrong settled £100 a year on his parents, and gave each of his sisters £500.

Miss Mitford received a letter the other day from Paris, telling her (on the authority of one of Louis Napoleon's *officiers d'ordonnance*) that it was foretold to him by a black woman of Ham that he should rule over France, should make her great and happy, and then should be shot in a ball-room. He is said to believe this prediction implicitly.*

I transcribe from Miss Mitford's letter. I had asked her who the Princess Mathilde is, of whom the newspaper says that she had on her knees entreated L. N. not to confiscate the Orleans property. *You* know probably that she is Jerome Bonaparte's daughter, married to Count Demidoff. She is said to be the most beautiful woman in France, and exceedingly lively and brilliant, a great favorite of the prince president, who calls her always *la belle cousine*. The most beautiful things in the Great Exhibition (excepting the Tunisian and Indian vases and fabrics), the malachites, come from the estates of Count Demidoff. Another extract from this letter I must give you.

"Madame de Girardin was herself a French poetess, of name Delphine Gay. About eight or ten years ago she wrote a comedy *en cinq actes et en vers*, called 'L'École des Journalistes,' very clever and tremendously severe. She summoned all the most celebrated authors of Paris, especially the journalists, to read it to them. Jules Janin† thereupon wrote a *feuilleton*, giving an account of the sitting, and addressing her as 'mon beau confrère.' The whole was published, comedy, *feuilleton*, and two or three letters, pro and con, and a most amusing little volume is made."

"Mon beau confrère" to Madame de G. reminds me of a story of Talleyrand which Miss Beddoes told me. In Madame de Staël's novel of "Delphine," one of the characters—I forget her name, the friend of "Delphine"—was sup-

* The first part of this required no great prophetic power, if accounts are true of the manner in which he was treated by the soldiers when in prison.

† The editor of the *Journal des Débats*.

posed, though a woman, to be meant for Talleyrand. On somebody's asking him if he had read the novel, he said, "Non—on dit que nous y sommes tous les deux déguises en femmes," meaning Madame de Staël and himself.

Good-by, dear Mr. Starkey. I am sure you are tired of me, so I will at last take my leave.

Your affectionate scribbling sister,

E. E. JEPHSON.

In the following letter to Miss Jephson, Miss Mitford again refers to her correspondence with Mr. Starkey:

"I do not know, my very dear Emily, that I ever received more pleasure than from a most kind and charming letter from that delightful brother-in-law of yours, Mr. Starkey. I had sent off a letter to you the very morning that his arrived, for I am here a mile from our village post-office, and do not, unless upon some un-put-off-able occasion, send oftener than once a day. I lost no time, of course, in thanking him for the kindness, which I feel I owe in great measure to your partiality, dear friend, to which I have so often been indebted before. Thank you for liking my book: I continue to receive letter after letter about it.

"I have another letter from Mrs. Hoare. I like her: she speaks with the truest feeling of poor Mrs. James Gray, and has sent me three striking poems of hers.

"Mrs. Hoare has sent me a little book of her own writing, called 'Shamrock Leaves,' a painful book, since it deals in details of the years of famine, and tells its story with much apparent truth. One thing she mentions—blue and white and pink harebells growing wild in an orchard. Now I never saw a wild harebell of any color but blue—did you? I have seen it white when cultivated, but pink never. I wonder whether she confounds it with the wild hyacinth? Inaccurate people sometimes call both harebells, and the wild hyacinth is sometimes found white (although very rarely, and a most beautiful variety it is), and sometimes of an intermediate lavender color that might be called pink; but there is no answering for that strange, puzzling thing, the coloring

matter of flowers. The soil of Ireland may produce pink harebells."

There is an additional leaf enclosed in this letter containing the following:

"Days enough have passed since I wrote the enclosed for me to have received another most charming letter from Mr. Starkey. To-day I received, too, another letter from Mrs. Browning; she has seen George Sand, and is charmed with her. She came to Paris chiefly to solicit the President for a friend of hers. He received her most kindly, shook hands with her, and granted her request. (Those precious newspapers of ours said, if you remember, that he had exiled her.) Mrs. Browning is quite as enthusiastic for the Prince President as ever. To-day, too, came a packet of unbound sheets—a poem without a title-page, whose title I take to be 'Verdicts.' It is on recent poets, and shows great boldness and talent. The page and a half given to me is most carefully and beautifully written, and with so much encomium that one cannot help thinking it must be by a friend. Mrs. Browning says George Sand is not 'taller than I am'—short, of a colorless, olive complexion, with dark, glowing eyes, black hair, and a noble countenance. She was very simply dressed (as a woman), in a room with a bed in it; her manner very kind, very quiet; a low, soft voice, an unemphatic utterance, rather calm than ardent. Now all this I knew except the shortness, which I can hardly believe even now; she must have looked so ill in doublet and hose. Mrs. Browning could not help stooping to kiss her hand, upon which Madame Sand threw her arms round her neck and kissed her upon the lips."

The following is Miss Mitford's reply to a second letter from Mr. Starkey; it is undated, but from the postmark seems to have been sent on February 25, 1852:

"You will spoil me, dear Mr. Starkey, by over-kindness, which from such a person as you is very dangerous. I can hardly tell you how much I was made ashamed by your

letter; the estimate of those poor poets is a poem in itself —all the more a poem because of its truth. It is a compliment to my own critical vanity to say how nearly we agree in our estimate, differing only so far as any two outspoken and independent minds unbiassed by clique or coterie would be sure to differ, as much as two leaves upon the same oak-tree. I have been called to the examination of our recent great poets, or rather to my own impression of them, by the receipt of the sheets of a poem—not yet published—called 'Verdicts.' It arrived without preface, title-page, or written note, or anything to give token of the author, and it is only by an advertisement in a paper sent to me to-day for another purpose that I find it to be published by Effingham Wilson. It is very powerful, knocking down false reputations, Keble, Pollok, Kirke White, Robert Montgomery (by the way, Mrs. Hoare tells me the aforesaid Robert proposed to and was refused by poor Mrs. James Gray), separating the man Southey from the author, and the poet Wordsworth from the man.

"It is the first time I ever saw the truth told in print of Wordsworth, whom I never saw in his own mountains, but whom I sat next at dinner one year in London four days running, to the great endangerment of my admiration; for a man so wrapped up in the double worship of his own poetry and of mere rank and riches in others I never did see. It is not of that that the poet of 'Verdicts' talks, but of his general coldness to others; we neither of us bring the slightest accusation against him in point of conduct, but the thing was disenchanting, nevertheless. There are a good many points in which he and I should disagree, and his overestimate of my poor books is something to wonder at in so acute a person. But still it is a very powerful and shining poem, and would have been sure to make a sensation, if the author had had a little more sense of sound. It is written in the Bath Guide jingle, which, if it do not run trippingly over the tongue, is worse than nothing. None but a contemporary of Moore can tell how much his fine feeling of rhythm, the flow and sweetness of his verse, aided his reputation. People were helped to the words by the sound, and so remembered them: it was like an air in music.

"And so, dear Mr. Starkey, you have written a tragedy! and upon the most delightful of all subjects, the Spaniards and the Moors. I remember seeing a great conjunction of fine actors, Young, Charles Kemble, Macready, and Miss O'Neil, in a drama called the 'Apostate,' by Mr. Shiel. Of course such a cast would have insured success under any circumstances; but I always thought the happy selection of place, and time, and races did more for it still. I would never recommend any friend to write for the stage, because it nearly killed me with its unspeakable worries and anxieties, and I am certainly ten years older for having so written; but of all forms of poetry it is the one I prefer, and I would always advise the writing with a view to the production of the piece upon the boards, because it avoids the danger of interminable dialogues of coldness and of languor. I remember a dear friend of mine (Mr. Monck, member for Reading, a first-rate scholar, and a man of great general taste) confessing to me that he read himself to sleep four nights in one week over the 'Fall of Jerusalem' of our mutual friend, Mr. Milman. Write for the stage, but don't bring the play out—that is my advice. If you wish to know my reasons, you may find some of them in the fact that one of my tragedies had seven last acts, and that two others fought each other during a whole season at Covent Garden Theatre; Mr. Macready insisting upon producing one, Charles Kemble equally bent upon the other—neither of them even pretending to any superiority of either play, but because one, a man of fifty, would play the young man's part, and the other insisted that none but himself should have anything like a telling part at all. Both were read in the green-room, both advertised—and just think of the poor author in the country all the time, while the money was earnestly wanted, and the non-production fell upon her like a sin!

"Some day you must let me see your tragedy. I am very sure that it is the finest form of poetry: that which unites passion and action, which talks, and lives, and moves.

"Yes, it was Béranger. I have a great love of French literature, and a great habit of throwing myself into it for months together; and the lyrics of Victor Hugo (not his

dramas or novels), and the *chansons* of the great old man (of which I do not mean the *chansons grivoises*, for which he is now probably infinitely grieved) always seem to me the verdant spots of French poetry. I forgot to tell Emily Jephson that Mr. Browning says M. de Cormenin (you know the brilliant political writer) was Louis Napoleon's adviser in the confiscation of the Orleans property.

"I shall have tired you to death with this long scrawl, dear Mr. Starkey, all unworthy as I am to be the faintest shadow of Miss Edgeworth. But my rheumatism is to blame. I have been afraid of the wind to-day, and my correspondents have suffered."

The following is from Miss Jephson to Mr. Starkey:

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

March 11.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—A charming letter has just arrived from dear Miss Mitford, except that I am sorry for her rheumatism, which is worse, and her writing is quite rheumatic. I will transcribe most of her letter for you; it will divert me from thinking of a trouble of my own.

"What is very strange about Motherwell is that I have literally given of him all that will live—the lyrics are common and poor. Most wonderful that the man who wrote that inimitable ballad, or, rather, those two inimitable ballads, for I think 'My heid is like to rend' nearly as fine as 'Jeanie Morrison,' although more painful, should not have produced other poems of merit. To be sure, he was touching and retouching 'Jeanie Morrison,' line by line and word by word, all his life. As for Dr. Holmes, who lives, they say, on every man's lips in Boston, he was totally unknown in England until I published my book. By mere accident my dear friend Mr. Fields sent me his 'Astræa.' He appears to me the most charming little person under the sun, what Moore was thirty years ago, with more pith and substance, singing his own songs as nobody else can sing them, reciting poems, delivering speeches, the most brilliant and sparkling man of society that ever lived, and one of the

most skilful and admirable physicians, who makes every patient his friend. John Whittier is a Quaker. It is to be noted that he sent me an illustrated edition of his works, bound in scarlet morocco, with a vast quantity of gilding and a portrait; but he himself is a very strict Quaker, calling every man by his Christian name, and theeing everybody male or female. He is popular, as the ardent party-man will generally be—that is, with the abolitionists—a sincere and zealous man, who would lay down his life for his opinion. I think I like a little volume of his, called 'Songs of Labor,' even better than the ballads I have quoted, although it is less characteristic. 'Nathaniel Hawthorne' is the most beautiful of all. Magnificently beautiful, and gifted, as you see, and educated at the same college and with the same advantages as Longfellow, he was, three or four years ago, without vice or extravagance on his part, literally starving. My friend, Mr. Fields, heard of it (he is a partner in the great publishing house in America), and being a man of fine taste as well as fine feeling, and having seen some of Hawthorne's magazine articles, he went to him and said, 'I have such a faith in you that, if you will give me a book, I will print two thousand five hundred copies, run all risks, and allow you twenty-five per cent.' The poor author demurred; he had begun a tale which was to form one of a volume of short stories, and showed him neither more nor less than the 'Scarlet Letter.' My friend, Mr. Fields, himself a poet, said at once, 'This must not be one of a volume of short stories; it must be a fully developed tale,' and accordingly Mr. Hawthorne took his advice, and is now in comfort and affluence. Still, it is a difficult mind to deal with. I asked Mr. Fields why he had not endeavored to expunge the railway journey in the 'House of the Seven Gables,' which is a blot upon the book, and he said, 'If I had found the slightest fault, he would instantly have flung the whole MS. into the fire.' Mr. Whittier went to see him once, and the maid denied him. The Quaker, seeing him through the window, made his way in. Hawthorne hardly spoke. Whittier is habitually taciturn, but after sitting a quarter of an hour in absolute silence, he got up and said, 'This won't do, Na-

thaniel; let us go out into the fields,' and then they got on better. Miss Brewer, who was two years in America, told Mrs. Kingsley that Hawthorne was mad. Now, that is not the case, but it is a peculiar idiosyncrasy, and there is no saying how it may end. If you saw all his writing, you would see how very much the unreal predominates over the real—the bright, sunny daylight of life and of nature. Have you seen Longfellow's 'Golden Legend'? I delight in it. It is the most racy of all his poems, a complete reproduction of German literature and German life in the Middle Ages —quaint, rich, and grand as a Gothic cathedral. There is one passage on a bell, in an out-door sermon, peculiarly fine. It is taken from an old German poem, with an improved catastrophe. You know, of course, that the 'Evangeline' was taken from the 'Hermann and Dorothea' of Goethe.

"If I write another book, I shall make an article on Summervill. It is a grand old house of more than ordinary interest—I mean, Elizabeth gave it to Leicester (odious people both!), and Charles II. used to be much there when the court was at Ivybridge. Miss Goldsmid says that it remains just as it was when peopled with the heroes and heroines of the 'Memoires de Grammont.' It will put one's English and one's dexterity to the test to give a scene or two which shall lose the wickedness and retain the wit of Count Anthony Hamilton, but I shall try. Full it is of old pictures and old books, the park and gardens full of fine old trees and sweet old flowers.

"Yes—you do know Woodcock Lane; but the beginning is the least picturesque part, although it looks cool and verdant even there. Here I can reach the other end of the lane through about a mile of exquisite scenery—but when I shall be able to walk a mile again who can tell? However, my own lanes are charming. Mr. Starkey is a man in a million."

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

March 16.

Your letters, dearest Mr. Starkey, always give me the strongest desire to possess that carpet of the "Arabian

Nights" by which one might transport one's self whither one would. If I had it, you would assuredly see a little old woman, ugly enough for a personage in any fairy-tale, alight amongst your family party (Emily says that it is there you ought to be kept), and taking place amidst your beautiful children and your charming wife for the sake of a good literary talk.

What I like least in rereading "Verdicts" is the exceeding one-sidedness. It is strange that extreme liberals should be so little tolerant—and out of this springs a great many differences of opinion. He overrates Dickens and Jerrold and Bulwer much—all, to my fancy, so vulgar in their different ways; and underrates Scott. Besides, there is a want of compression, very bad in satire, which should be rapid and pungent; nevertheless, there is talent.

Poor Mr. Moore! I knew him well, and, rating him as a poet much lower than you do, delighted in him as a companion and wit — the most perfectly graceful, genial, and kindly of all wits. As a family man, he was, I believe, more than usually amiable. My acquaintance with him was in town, but a dear friend of mine was his near neighbor and Mrs. Moore's intimate friend at Sloperton, and she says that she never knew a more exemplary husband and father. After the loss of all his children, they saw him one day looking over a large packet of letters from eminent persons. He said, "I think I shall burn these now, for there is nobody left to value them for my sake, and I do not wish them to be preserved as autographs." He died, as of course you know, of the same disease that carried off Scott and Southey, and of which Dr. Buckland is now dying—softening of the brain. A remarkable instance of the strange and variable manner in which that complaint works was related to me the very day after it occurred by my friend the Rev. Alexander Dyce. He was spending a day with me two or three years ago, with our mutual friend William Harness, and he said, "I breakfasted yesterday with Rogers, and he showed me a letter just received from Moore—the strangest letter, sentences begun and broken off, and begun again, just like the sort of copy that a very small schoolboy makes

when writing his first letter home. We were quite startled, but, going to Longmans on business afterwards, they showed me a letter that they had just received from Moore about a bargain for his diaries—a short, clear letter of business which would have done honor to any banker in London. Both letters bore the same date." Now this was before the disease had declared itself, and, I suppose, could only be explained by his retaining the power of exerting his mind for the short letter on business, whilst the command deserted him while writing to a familiar friend like Mr. Rogers. How that disease is increasing! Mr. Kingsley and dear John Lucas, the great portrait-painter, have both confessed to me that they apprehend themselves to be affected by it—young men both, but both addicted to smoking. By the way, I have to-day a very charming letter from a young American in Rome, and, amongst other stories of the laureate in Italy, he says that he left Florence because he could get no good tobacco. As to the late laureate, I admire as much as can be his earlier and greater poems. Half a volume will live as long as the language. I am afraid that I have never so heartily liked Wordsworth since it became a fashion to praise him, and little misses and heavy young gentlemen who have no real enjoyment in literature of any kind have thought it necessary to fling themselves into ecstasies at his power.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LETTERS FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

Saturday night, April 12, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—I go at once to business. You would hardly imagine me to be a veteran writer, so little I know of authors, editors, or publishers. The only living English publisher whom I have ever seen is, I believe, Mr. Bentley, and I have only seen him twice, and certainly should not know him again. Messrs. Blackwood sent me their magazine containing a review of myself, with a very kind note, a week or two back. I do, however, know their London manager. I enclose you a note for him, which you may deliver or not, as you like. His family are people of old standing in the vale of Berkshire, farming their own property—most respectable in every way. Still, he is only the managing man at Messrs. Blackwood's, and it is not like giving you a note to one of themselves. I suppose that Professor Aytoun is the editor; but even this I do not absolutely know.

You and Mr. Waller will spoil me, my dear Mr. Starkey. I never could understand what people find to like in my letters, unless it be that they spring direct from the soil, that they have a root to them—the sort of quality that makes one sometimes prefer a wild plant alive and growing in its woodland nook to a fine cut flower in a rich vase. It is strange how few people let one have thought and feeling just as they spring, either in letters or in conversation. They talk reviews, they talk newspapers, anything except the natural promptings of their own minds. But I must not forget that some of my correspondents—you, for instance—are affluent to overflowing; you give the impulse, and then praise

that which you have prompted. Of one thing be quite assured, that I consider myself very much the greater gainer in our epistolary intercourse. Is it never to be more than epistolary? Is the one day in London "quite literal"? If not—if you can come here for a few hours, putting up with a cutlet at any time that may best suit you, you must let me have one line sent off the day before. You will find me crippled by rheumatism, and perhaps enchained by another terrible infliction—the dreadful operation of sitting for a portrait. Mr. Bentley sent to desire one of the many already taken, each being more unlike than the other. I wrote to tell our dilemma to Mr. Lucas, to whom I had long promised to sit, and accordingly he is coming on Monday, although, as I hope and believe that what he is about to do is only a drawing, it will hardly last longer than a couple of days. Do you (yourself, dear Emily says, so charming an artist) know John Lucas's portraits? It is not a noisy reputation; he exhibits little, never took the trouble of belonging to the Academy, and is seldom puffed in the newspapers. But somehow or other the best judges, the most refined people, go to him. The duke (who, perhaps no great connoisseur himself, yet lives among those who are) sits reluctantly to any one else, and generally refers all who ask him to "John Lucas's last picture." I suppose he has painted him some fifty times. Sir Robert Peel employed him to finish the Gallery of Contemporary Statesmen, which Sir Thomas Laurence began—I don't think any other artist worked at it—and now he is busy with another class of eminent men, our great engineers, having painted the Stephensons, father and son, especially George Stephenson, the elder and greater of the two, almost as often as the duke. His whole career is one delightful to contemplate—a struggle, always a struggle, and sometimes a very hard one, but patient, self-denying, virtuous, indomitable, and finally successful. His father, a junior clerk in the war-office, died early, and this, his eldest son, was placed as apprentice to Mr. Reynolds, an eminent mezzotint engraver. He told everybody that he would not be an engraver—that he would be a painter, and nothing else: but an engraver he was doomed to be; even running

away did not change his destiny. They coaxed him back, so there he stayed from fourteen to twenty-one, working from nine in the morning till eight at night, stealing all his mornings and half his meal-times for copying the fine pictures his master had to engrave (the "Chapeau de Paille" amongst the rest). By the time he was twenty he had made for himself so much reputation as an oil-painter as to have two or three portraits to paint among the professional people (clergymen and physicians) of the neighborhood, and Mr. Reynolds gave him one day in the week to fulfil his commissions, the fifty-two days having to be replaced after the apprenticeship had expired. When that hour of release arrived, he offered him a large salary to remain with him, as Cornish (also one of his pupils) had done; but our painter refused, flung himself courageously upon the higher branches of art, and through many privations has won at forty-five his present position. A most charming person he is. I owe him immense good-will as being one of the few young men of genius who have not disappointed my enthusiasm; in general they lose heart, or they lose temper, or they go astray, or they die. I think a portrait of me was the third he painted after he left Mr. Reynolds, through the intervention of Mr. Milton, Mrs. Trollope's brother, my old friend and neighbor, interested in him because his father had been a clerk in the war-office, where he held a higher post. From that hour we have been fast friends. The moment he had a house he installed his mother in it; he has been a father to his younger brothers; he married a pretty, amiable, domestic woman for love; he despises all fineries, and is, as I said before, a most charming person—delightful in manner, in conversation, and in appearance. He looks good.

What is very odd is that, just before this affair of Mr. Bentley, my maid K. had shown a miniature, taken of me when between three and four years old, to a friend of mine who took a fancy to it. I let him have it, of course, and now it seems *that* is in course of being engraved also, to the great begrudging of Mr. Bentley, who wants both, and I suppose will finally have a second engraving of the miniature. So there will be the little childish face and the poor old

miserable cripple of nowadays side by side—a morality as good as a death's head and cross-bones any day.

What did I say about Mr. Moore, I wonder? One's only misgiving should be the apparent presumption of saying anything at all, my chief knowledge of him being the meeting him at the houses of mutual friends, and hearing of him often from those who knew him well and loved him most. A most delightful person he was, and, I believe, a most amiable one. The sins of the foolish volume, which did not bear his name, were, I believe, by none more regretted than himself. When one looks at the works of Herrick, for instance—a clergyman of the Church of England—it does seem strange how such refinement can be joined with such grossness. The political squibs I have seen, and (don't be angry, now) I confess that I think that *there* (especially in bits of the Judge family) lay his forte—some of the fun in those letters has not been exceeded even by Mr. Barham (Thomas Ingoldsby). I am quite sure that, except upon the ground of partiality, I might always trust to you as regards myself, your judgment being better than my own.

Thank you very much for "The Slingsby Papers." I had seen and heard enough of them to wish to see more, and have just been reading with great interest the "Legend of St. Valentine." I like those stories of Martyrology. Mr. Kingsley told me that except his own father I was the only one who had ever spoken to him of Lockhart's fine novel "Valerius." Thank you very much. The other day I received out of Wales, sent by somebody who, signing his or her letter with five initials and a surname (Wynne), left the gender uncertain, an unpublished charade of Mr. Reed's, very different from any of the others—a charade in three pictures, and in the old ten-syllable couplet, but full of his ease and taste and matchless grace. You shall have a copy in my next despatch.

Another present I have had—an old cane, the real and veritable cane always used by the celebrated speaker Lenthall, and handed down in the family as an heirloom. It looks two hundred years old, tough, and dry, and incredibly light, with a top of enamelled copper, the tip broken off (be-

headed, so to say, by that benevolent Roundhead), and decorated by a sort of loop and tassel of plaited leather. Looking after his name as appended to one of the letters signed by him, but written by Milton, I was amused to see that Christina of Sweden was addressed as Queen of the Goths and Vandals.

Did I tell Emily Jephson a story of Mr. Byron, the Shelley letter-forger, and his doings with Mr. Bennett? It is curious. If you do not know that, it must be also for the next packet. Do you know, my dear Mr. Starkey, that I believe your business life is good for your talent as an author. My friend, Mr. Bennett, has just joined his brother in Cheapside, whose watchmaking and jewelry business is the greatest in the city of London, and he agrees with me that it does add tone and muscle to the otherwise too delicate and unsubstantial turn of genius.

All success to your literary negotiations! I should augur well of a prose tale by you. Well! I think you will not again be in haste to encourage me to write you long letters —I that live like a sort of female hermit in the quietest nook in England. Ever, dear friend,

Very faithfully yours, M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

April 29, 1852.

Well, my dear Mr. Starkey, I wonder if I shall tire you of my letters? I'm going to try, because, if I've to write another book, as they tell me, it follows, of course, that I shall give my correspondents some respite, and, therefore, may as well weary them first. Let me say how very glad I am that my letter reached you, and that the little note did its business. I hope that the MS. will find a vacancy, for that will probably be the question. I take for granted that they have hundreds of offers at this moment, and cannot always be expected to keep a place for the best. Chance has something to do in these things, as well as choice. As to Mr. Langford, I wish you had an hour to give him. He would have told you all the chit-chat of London literature, and would have let you find out a fine manly nature under the gossip-

ing. For my part, I have been listening to the artistical chit-chat of my dear friend Mr. Lucas—infinitely amusing when one happens to know the people. Do you know Sir Edwin Landseer? Mr. Lucas and he live just opposite at St. John's Wood, and frequently walk home together from great houses where they have dined, that being their chief acquaintance-ship, for they are far too different men to be intimate. Knowing that they often met, Mr. Peto, when sitting to Mr. Lucas, requested him to take a message for him to Sir Edwin. Accordingly, during their next night's walk my friend said, "I am commissioned by Mr. Peto to ask you to do him the favor to paint him a picture—on your own subject, of your own size, at your own price, at your own time. His offer is quite unlimited. He leaves all to you." "Really," responded the little dog-painter, "I cannot give any promise at present; but I'll bear it in my mind." I wish you had heard the exquisite touch of mimicry with which John Lucas (who is himself an exceedingly delightful compound of courtliness and manliness) drawled out, in the finest whisper, "I'll bear it in mind." There was an answer to a commission more than royal—for I am quite sure that (except Louis Napoleon) there is not a prince now alive who would have given such a one. But Landseer is faithful to his worship of lords. If a peerage had been given to Mr. Peto last year—all Peto and all engineer as he is—the answer would have been different. What is worse, this coxcombry is spreading among these really great artists—Lewis is come back from Cairo just as exclusive, making it a far greater favor to paint for people than any of the immortal painters of the great age of Art. He seems to have been cultivating coxcombry during his long residence in the East. Thackeray, with whom he had been intimate in London, went to see him at Cairo, and found him in a room fitted up with divans and carpets in a style perfectly Oriental, with a beard to his waist. The painter never rose, but waved his hand for his visitor to be seated, and for several minutes there they sat as silent as two pachas. At last Mr. Lewis clapped his hands, and a whole covey of black boys, pretty much of a size, all properly turbaned and trousered and besashed, made their appear-

ance with trays of coffee and sweetmeats and rose-water, and chibouks. Having drunk their coffee and begun to smoke, the Orientalized Englishman found his tongue, and it is to be presumed that Mr. Thackeray did not depart without reading him a lesson.

My friend is of another stamp. I know nobody so agreeable. He has made a portrait of me, ugly old woman as I am, which is really a miracle of art. I wish you could see it. He calls it an oil sketch—the background and figure being very slightly painted, but the head (half the size of life) finished almost like a miniature. It is an oval picture. I cannot fancy that the engraver will transmit the expression, which is the wonderful point of this extraordinary portrait, to the steel. How a painter can convey anything so evanescent, so ideal, to the canvas is wonder enough! All who have seen it cry out upon the likeness, which is as a looking-glass, but it seems to me, as far as that remarkable expression goes, to look not as I ever do, but as it is just possible I might do. It is not at all animated, which would be the trap into which a vulgar artist would undoubtedly have fallen in painting me, but thoughtful and affectionate. Well, you will come and see me myself, I do trust, before the summer is over. You may see thousands better worth looking at and listening to, dear Mr. Starkey, but you will hardly find anybody more rejoiced to make acquaintance with you.

Then I have had a visit from a young Cambridge student, a poet of the newest school, who won't be a barrister, as his mother desires, but will be a poet, and only a poet, nothing else. I knew his father well, a most brilliant man, who might have sat for the fine character of Clarence Hervey in that novel of Miss Edgeworth's which for brilliancy and tenderness has always seemed to me her best—"Belinda." His destiny was a mistaken, although not an unprosperous, one, and, now that he has been long dead, the mother and elder brother and aunts think him revived in this boy. I do not. The father had a magnificent gift of public speaking, and added to the buoyant and graceful lightness of old English comedy an earnestness without which there can be no eloquence, and hardly, I think, any poetry. This youth

is a handsome coxcomb, without the slightest enthusiasm, without, as it seems to me, the power of admiring anything or anybody; for those whom he does patronize—the Jerrolds, and Dickenses, and Robert Brownings—he patronizes with a full sense of his condescension, whilst he very heartily disclaims all acquaintance with Pope or Dryden (observe that his own first essay is a volume called "Stories from Boccaccio"), and rather boasts that, although he has tried to read Scott's novels, he cannot get on with them. I think it would be no bad plan to introduce him to Sir Edwin and Mr. Lewis, and just see what they thought of each other. It might turn out a society for mutual improvement. However, they *are* painters, and great painters in their way—whilst what will become of this poor boy there is no telling. He minces his words like Landseer, and sticks his glass in his eye. The only thing worth repeating that I ever heard from him is a *good-natured bon-mot* of Jerrold's. They were talking of epitaphs at Charles Knight's, and asked the malicious little wit to furnish one for their host. "It should be very short," said Jerrold—"Good Night." Nothing can be happier than this.

I am in a vein to-night of writing the wrong word for the right—just as compositors print—and can only beg you to be as indulgent as the Moore committee. What a mistake! But there are fifty such in my last book, not, I hope, reproduced in the Paris edition, or in the American ones. I had thought that the new international law would have put a stop to Galignani's reprints, but it has not. Where the demand is large, he finds it more profitable to purchase the copyright in France of the English publisher than to import the work. By the way, without having any personal cause to delight in Mr. Bentley, I think him perfectly right in the bold stand he is making against the other great publishers, and give him all possible credit for his ability and his moral courage. I have good cause to believe those very able statements which bear his name to be his own writing, because I have had from him two or three private letters on the subject, even more condensed, and more lucid. He was educated at St. Paul's School, and is certainly a clever man.

You will understand, dear friend, that what I feared about Mr. Moore was seeming to arrogate greater intimacy with a distinguished man than actually existed. I had seen him often, often sat next him at dinner; we have exchanged notes occasionally, and were excellent friends, but neither of us living in London, nor within visiting distance in the country, I have never been at his house, and he, I think, only once at our cottage; though, if I had gone near Sloperton, I should undoubtedly have accepted his repeated invitations, and have gone to see one whom I always found so pleasant and so kind. You will comprehend that aversion to claiming acquaintance with great people who might disclaim me. It sometimes leads one into the contrary fault, and I find people saying, "Why, he said that he knew you."

So you are reading Lamartine's "Restoration." I was like my young poet with Scott's novels, and could not get on with it anyhow. I am afraid that I like nothing heartily of Lamartine's, except "Le Lac," and "Jocelyn" (a little), and "Les Girondins"—that charming romance (he calls it a history), which, knowing it all by reading a dozen real histories, and a hundred memoirs of the period, yet carries one on, partly by subject, partly by style. I suppose that he is always false, but in "Les Girondins" one is beguiled into forgetting that great literary sin; for it is worse than a fault. If you have happened to read his half-dozen autobiographies (for such they are under different names), you will find that, at three or four different dates, fifteen years asunder, he calls himself twenty—his favorite age—and indeed, in something written a year or two ago, he speaks of himself as then a man still in his prime, in the summer of his days, or words to that effect—and he was sixty then! Ah, if he had my rheumatism!! Vanity is the ruling motive there, of course, and I suppose that wounded vanity—something that Louis Napoleon has done, or left undone, personally towards him—is his reason for publishing this weak and dull attack upon the emperor. But his incapacity for appreciating truth is best shown in "Géneviève," where, without any possible personal motive, he shows an indifference to it which is almost inconceivable in one who has so long practised writing as

an art. Do you remember that the whole gist of the story turns on this pattern woman of the people sacrificing her own reputation, losing the man of her heart, making him miserable, and oversetting the comfort of a whole family by accepting the scandal of a natural child in order to preserve a dead sister and her dead lover (for there is nobody left alive to profit by the lie) from the blame, the posthumous blame of their fault—in the more romantic words of the writer, to preserve unstained the funeral garland of the sister whom she loved? It is the exact reverse of Jeanie Deans, and in my mind both were wrong. I would have told the lie in Jeanie's case, the less evil of the two, but in Géneviève's it was a deliberate preference of falsehood for no cause whatever. She lied for lying's sake. And this runs all through Lamartine's writings, and was the cause of his fall. I am very fond of French literature, with all its sins—I know it, I think, better than English. God bless you, dear friend! Ever faithfully yours, M. R. MITFORD.

MISS JEPHSON *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

May 1.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—There is a *new* pleasure for me connected with dear Miss Mitford's letters of late, for I have now and then something to send you that I *know* you like. Is not her description of the ungenial season very poetical? It reminds one of Titania's. The east wind has not done *us* such wrong; our wild-flowers blow, and our birds sing, but I have not yet seen a swallow. Is there an instinct that tells the swallows what the weather is in the distant countries to which they are about to migrate and retards their flight thither? or do they come, and, meeting the harsh wind, withdraw till it is gone? . . .

If the faith which has the least foundation is the most meritorious, it seems to me that the Louis Napoleon faith has extraordinary merit. Pray hope for me in that Mr. Bentley will be generous, and that I shall have the two portraits; I have one of Miss M. by Lucas, and it is very like, but the dress is unsuited to the face, and entirely spoils it. I wrote to you yesterday. E. J.

The following letter from Miss Mitford is enclosed:

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

April 26, 1852.

MY VERY DEAR EMILY,—There are not many people to whom I should venture to send poetry addressed to myself, and, to say the truth, I receive so much of the peculiar rhymes which the old poets used to call "commendatory verses" that I have a perfect horror of the sight of lines beginning with capitals and ending (but in these days of lax versification they very seldom do so end) with similar sounds. However, the accompanying lines seem to me quite an exception to my rule of aversion—are they not charming?* The writer is a young and beautiful girl, daughter of a veterinary surgeon in Reading, who was introduced to me when about fourteen, and whom I have supplied with books and seen frequently ever since. She is a sweet, open-hearted

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* These lines, which have been given in the "Life of M. R. Mitford," are as follows:

ON BEING ASKED IF MISS MITFORD WERE NOT OLD.

Ye would not ask it of the sun that shines upon us daily,
Or of the fleecy painted clouds that float above us gayly,
Or of the spring's returning flowers, or the dew their petals lading,
Or of the heaven-besprinkling stars, when morn their gold is fading,
Or of the crested billows, when upon the shore they're casting
Their flashing sprays of diamonds; for ye know them everlasting
Till their Ruler's might shall gather them within his wondrous holding,
For which we look half fearfully—frail creatures of his moulding.
The beautiful is never old. Our minds are still extending,
And new emotions of the soul are with each moment blending;
And so her spirit seems to me an ever-rising mountain,
Upon whose glorious sides still plays the broad Castalian fountain;
Or as an oak, whose green boughs spread, and throw luxuriantly
A shelter o'er small birds of song—scarce worthy there to be;
But verdure rests upon her leaves, they dread no frost's decaying;
Her charm upon the landscape cast will evermore be staying.
As 'mid her own dear village haunts, my gauntlet down I'm flinging,
The very birds that flutter round are blithe my measure singing.
She is not old. The spirit's youth will but to heaven be winging.

MARIANNE PARRY.

Reading, April 26, 1852.

creature. Her father is lately dead, and an uncle, a surgeon in India, married, and without a family, has sent for her to live with them, not to get a husband—I would answer with my life for Marianne's delicacy and fastidiousness—but to be taken as a daughter. There is a sister to remain with the mother, who tearfully consents to a project so advantageous (for the uncle and aunt are educated and accomplished people), and the poor child herself is half broken-hearted, and yet full of grateful affection towards those to whom she is going. It's a contest of feeling—all right and natural. May God's mercy go with her! She is a sweet creature, and certainly a girl of far more genius than the many I know who set up for great poetesses.

Mr. Lucas, who was here when they arrived, and is a man of very fine taste, was so struck with the lines that he has made his boy, who was also here, copy them for his mother's album. Perhaps, my love, you do not know why Mr. Lucas was here. It has pleased Fate, in the shape of Mr. Bentley, to set his heart on portraits of me. There are *two* engravings to be made of a miniature taken when I was between three and four years old—and he wants the miniature into the bargain, or, rather, he grudges it to Mr. Bennett, to whom it is irrevocably given; and now that Mr. Lucas, incomparably the finest painter of female portraits now alive, has condescended to come and take me, he is not content with the engraving, which he is to have, but he covets the picture. I fancy, if he can get *his* engraving of the miniature done soon enough, that both are to appear in the new number of his miscellany, which he is working to get up by first-rate illustrations. Afterwards they will appear in their legitimate place in future editions of my last book, or at the head of another, if I live to write one. I wonder whether Mr. Bentley, who is making a great deal of money of the "Recollections," will send me any copies of the engravings. If he do, it would be a singular pleasure to send you one of them; but it is doubtful. The American publishers purchased the early sheets of him, and now, under the new law, he is making Galignani (forced to reprint it in Paris from the large demand there) pay for the right of publication in France.

If the engraving approach the high artistic value of Mr. Lucas's picture, it will be no common print, for certainly so successful a portrait was never taken. It tried us both, for I sat and he painted nine hours a day; and on Saturday my legs were so much swollen that both K. and I thought my stockings must have been cut off. Till the east wind abates, there is no chance of amendment, and Professor Airy says we are to have five weeks more. For two months not a drop of rain has fallen. We have sharp frosts every night; the hedges are bare, the very oaks are let stand, because the sap has not risen enough to back them. The flowers refuse to blow in wood or field, or, if a few rare and reluctant blossoms appear, they are scentless. I have only once heard the nightingale amongst our coppices or our woody lanes, and in this place, literally named after the swallow, not one has appeared. Never in my remembrance has there been so severe a season. It has carried off too many of my dearest friends, amongst the rest my most kind and accomplished neighbor, Sir Henry Russell, and I fear his death will eventually deprive me of Miss Russell, my own Anne; for, although the new baronet be a nice lad, yet one cannot expect a gay young Guardsman to live quietly with his mother and sisters.

I had a charming letter, or note rather, from dear Mr. Starkey, containing a half promise to come to see me in the summer—Heaven send it come true! I am expecting my glorious Americans now in Paris, and tribes of people from London, and dear Lady Stanley—only think of our having in common the Louis Napoleon faith! Mrs. Browning is more zealous in his cause than ever, and says that everybody in Paris is coming round. Do read the "Prisoner of Ham," in spite of its bad English. It is the most interesting account of an escape ever written, and there are bits of his own writing that even the vile translation cannot rob of the charming sentiment. Adieu, my very dear love. Believe me, ever most affectionately yours,

M. R. Mitford.

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

June 15.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—I am very glad that you find so much pleasure in Miss Mitford's correspondence, and I am sure that yours is equally delightful to her. Your kindness in saying that you owe anything to me is very gratifying, but the truth is that your first letter to her was the origin of the friendship which has grown and flourished so happily. I cannot help being sorry that she will not know your reasons for not admiring Louis Napoleon as she does, which she will probably infer from your silence on the subject. She can bear very well a difference of opinion on most points, I believe, but, as you say, her feelings seem strongly engaged on the side of Louis Napoleon. I tried in vain some time ago to get "Inez de Castro," and others asked Miss Mitford to lend it to me for you; but it seems that it never was printed. I enclose her answer to my request.

The following is the letter referred to:

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

MY VERY DEAR EMILY,—I am in so much haste that I foresee this will be merely a scrap; but I wished to tell you that "Inez de Castro," although three times in rehearsal, was never acted, and therefore never printed. I am not even sure that I have a MS. copy. If I have, I suppose that some time or other I shall make a volume of tragedies old and new, for my very best, "Otto of Wittelsbach," is in a similar predicament—at all events, the whole will be printed after I am dead. I have most interesting accounts of the Prince President from Mrs. Browning and Mr. Fields, whom I expect here soon, and who will, I hope, bring me a cart-load of books about him. I told him to get me *all*, and the best portraits. He says that none do justice to his pale, earnest face, with its look of deep feeling, and the calm, gracious English manner as he saw him for two hours when sitting almost close to him at a ball at the Tuileries. He said to Madame Sand, on parting from her, after granting

all she asked and begging her to visit him again, "Vous verrez, vous serez contente de moi." To which she replied, "Et vous, vous serez content de moi." Was not this exceedingly nice on both sides, especially on his? I have a long, interesting letter from Mrs. Trollope at Florence, acting charades—what a woman!

MISS JEPHSON *to* D. STARKEY, ESQ.

July 29, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—Here is a letter which I will transcribe before I send it to you to-day, so pray keep it; is not this *generous* of me, because, if I asked you to return it, I should have, *perhaps*, a few lines from you, which I much long for.

Yesterday I went with Mrs. Halloran and Mrs. Chatterton to the regatta, and was charmed with the beauty and the novelty, to *me*, of all that I saw. We drove to Ballinacurragh, five miles from hence, and there found a crowded steamer, which took us to Queenstown. The views on both sides were charming, and then it opened into that magnificent harbor which you know. The fleet was gone, but the regatta was what I shall never forget. It was more like a beautiful oil-painting, at one particular moment, than reality. The sea was then quite calm, and of such an exquisite color—land, sky, and sea were each and all perfection; ships and boats innumerable, from the *Ajax* man-of-war to a tiny steamer which could only hold ten men, but had its chimney smoking, its paddle-boxes, all that belongs to a steamer in miniature. Some ships were dressed out with colors, which had a beautiful effect; boats were passing, the boatmen wearing crimson handkerchiefs on their heads and white jackets; the yachts, with their white sails, but no wind to sail with; crowds on shore, all colors of ladies' dresses, parasols, etc. There was a rowing-match with boats called gigs, very narrow and shallow; each boat looked like nothing more than a dark line upon the water, with the heads of men above it—in one boat the rowers all in white, in another all in red, different colors in each. The white won, and there was great shouting. There is hope that the Queen will come. I must try, if I can, to see her.

The other day, reading Carlyle's "Life of Oliver Cromwell," I was reminded of an observation in one of your letters to me by an account of poor Sir W. Raleigh's execution. Carlyle says:

"Such a man, with his head grown gray, with his strong heart breaking, still strength enough in it to break with dignity; somewhat proudly he laid his old gray head on the block, as if saying, in better than words, 'There, then!' The sheriff offered to let him warm himself again within doors at a fire. 'Nay, let us be swift,' said Raleigh; 'in a few minutes my ague will return upon me, and, if I be not dead before that, they will say I tremble for fear.'"

This weather is so hot that I should be afraid you were not the better for it, but that you have the fine refreshing sea air, *part* of the day, at least, for I fear you do not feel much of it at the Four Courts. This is a day fit only for butterflies to be out in, who are all wings, and have nothing more to carry. Ever your affectionate sister,

EMILY E. JEPHSON.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

July 25.

You will, I know, dearest Emily, be glad to hear that, although still very weak and feeble, I am getting on towards recovery. It has been a most severe attack, and I cannot be thankful enough to my kind and skilful friend, Mr. May, and to my indefatigable nurse K., for the care that they have taken of me—I ought to add all the Russells. Poor Lady Russell, who had never before gone beyond her park gate since her husband's death, and even now has seen nobody but me, has come to me every evening, and been to me as a sister, and her sweet daughters are more like daughters to me than nieces. What a blessing to be near such friends! Let me add that, as goodness is generally self-rewarding, their kindness has certainly done them all good by distracting them from their own sorrow, and giving them other things to think and to talk of. As to all my neighbors, their affection has been really wonderful, and it is at present Mr. May's great grievance that from pure gratitude I let in too many

people. You know how excitable I am, and it is true that the very conversation that gives me pleasure while it lasts leaves me heated and exhausted when it is over. However, I am getting stronger now. What a comfort that you did not come to England this summer! Mrs. Browning is in London, but my going to meet her is out of the question, so that, except a visit of a day which she intends to make me, I shall hardly see her this year; and dear Miss Goldsmid, who came purposely to see me from London, arrived when I was too ill even to see her, which was most tantalizing. I wish you knew that great and able woman!

One visit I have had which you would have liked to have seen, since I have been able to admit one or two friends. Two ladies from Paris sent me the most earnest entreaties to let them in, an old lady and a young one. The elder, almost as wonderful a person as Lady Stanley, announced herself as having known my father and mother before their marriage, as having been present at the wedding, as having, when a girl of eleven years old (she is seventy-six) been trusted to take the baby (me) in her arms. She remembered the house we inhabited at Alresford, the great dog, the pretty nursery-maid, and never having seen any of us since we left that place, when I was between three and four years old, but having followed my literary career with deep interest, you may imagine how much she was struck when Galignani's edition of my last book fell into her hands. She came from London on purpose to see me, and fully promises (D.V.) to pass a day with me next year. She is a magnificent old lady, full of fire and enthusiasm, and very clever. The young one—I think a granddaughter—was also very charming. You may imagine that this was gratifying to both parties. On the other hand, I have had a terrible shock. I told you of my visit from Miss Shee (sister to Sir George Shee, who is, I believe, our minister at Stuttgart), a most sweet creature, who left me the poems of her sister, Mrs. Robert Dering. My opinion of those poems, especially of the exquisite stanzas called "Church Services," brought on one of those correspondences of heart to heart and mind to mind which ripen friendships even more than personal intercourse. I

never read any letters like hers in their delicious grace and tenderness. There was a charm about them—a personal charm—like the odor of flowers. She had been ill, and her last note was written in pencil — the next thing I heard, while very ill myself, was that she was dead. She had sent me some beautiful Hertfordshire roses to clothe the front of my house, and now those roses are blossoming under my window, and the kind heart that sent them is cold in the grave. Dear Miss Shee writes most beautifully of her death. It was quite sudden, and is supposed to have been caused by some internal rupture; but her whole life was a preparation for death. Nevertheless, Miss Shee hardly expects her husband to survive her. There is only one son, a young man of great genius in another way, who is one of the most trusted in the great work of the Irish Submarine Telegraph. He seems to have left Oxford upon showing this strong turn for a pursuit which now takes rank with the learned professions, and leads at once to scientific fame and to worldly prosperity, and I trust that his success will comfort his aunt and father. This has been to me one of the greatest shocks that I have known.

I have had an exquisite letter from Mrs. Hawthorne, and one still more interesting from dear Dr. Holmes, while I have been so ill, and have read Mr. Hawthorne's own copy of his new book, "The Blythedale Romance"—the actual copy, which the moment it left my hands went to his, and first showed him his own thoughts in print. To say truth, I like it less than the other two great works, not merely because it is too long, not close enough, but because the characters are too unreal and exceptional, so that the only person whom I thoroughly fancy is a certain New England farmer, by name Silas Foster, who has nothing to do with the story, and seldom appears in the book, but who is flesh and blood. Nevertheless, observe that the book with all its faults is one that nobody but Hawthorne could have written, that the construction is magnificently tragic, and that there are certain scenes of wonderful power, especially the search for the body by night, which is quite equal to that in "Guy Mannering." Also, since I have been better, I have been read-

ing Lord Cockburn's "Life of Lord Jeffrey;" not well done, certainly, but some of the later letters are very interesting; what he says of Silchester, of Fletcher, and of the Irish songs and ballads is so like what I have always thought and often said, that it came upon me like an echo, and was very pleasant from one whose criticism is, according to my fancy, so much finer and better than that which we meet now.

N.B.—I quite disagree with him about Dickens, and it does not seem to me that he himself quite thinks all he says —by this I mean that I think he accommodates himself to the exaggerated tone which Dickens is accustomed to, in order to insinuate personal good advice. It is no compliment to an author to send him letters full of nothing but praises of his own works. How wise Scott was in avoiding this! God bless you, my dear love! Say everything for me to your dear people, especially Mr. Starkey. This letter may serve for him as well as you, for K. has just come to scold me for writing so long a one, so I must say good-by.

Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

CHAPTER XXV.

LETTERS FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

July 29, 1852.

I AM slowly mending, dear Mr. Starkey, but there is so much weakness that I see everybody almost as much alarmed at this sort of recovery as at the illness itself. Every one's manner says what some say in words, that I am breaking fast. However, I may revive, and, if not, His will be done! I am, and have always been, a most deceiving person as to health and strength. There is an appearance of both about me, great animal spirits, great excitability, and that is at present Mr. May's dread, for I like conversation as well as ever, and it heats and flushes me—and then comes the reaction, the sleepless, restless fatigue, and the feverish languor. However, I am better, the pulse is better. I have the constant and anxious attention of the most skilful medical man I really believe alive, who is as much my friend as my physician, the affectionate care of two very attached and faithful servants, the daily visits of one most charming family, and the calls and inquiries of more than are good for me (fourteen sets of people have been here to-day), so that the feeling of loneliness which often oppresses a poor old maiden lady wholly without relations is most mercifully spared me. Let me add the kind letters of distant correspondents, of old friends like Emily, of new friends like yourself, and surely I have very much for which to be thankful!

I agree with you in all that you say of Mr. Hawthorne. The "Great Stone Tale" is a grand piece of philosophy, and there is (I think in the "Twice-told Tales") a most striking one, where a series of events are developed by sounds, not words, by some old hag in a valley at night.

These were the things which inspired my dear friend, Mr. Fields, with the confidence in Mr. Hawthorne that produced "The Scarlet Letter," and changed his position from most miserable destitution to affluence and comfort. Nothing can exceed the beauty of his style. It reminds me of the French of that greatest of novelists, Balzac, the same power of subtle analysis and of minute description. I don't now believe that Balzac is known to him—very few English do relish him as he deserves. It requires great familiarity with French literature to do so. This dear friend of mine, Mr. Fields, is a fine judge of style. He has collected, in seven thickly printed volumes, all the writings of De Quincey—perhaps the greatest master of English now alive—and the sale in America of these volumes has been above three thousand, which, in six months, and without the slightest meretricious attraction, is very creditable to the nation. Did I say that Hawthorne's letters are very charming, so natural, so graceful, so unaffectedly modest and unspoilt. I agree with you about Prescott and Irving, only Prescott provokes me by not taking part enough with the Peruvians, or even with the Mexicans. I hate that avarice which cloaked itself in fanaticism.

Longfellow has beautiful bits, but his prose is trash, and I confess that I think he owes his success here quite as much to his faults, his obscurity, his mysticism, and his little dash of cant, as to his merits. For my own part, I greatly prefer the healthy and cheerful masculine verse of Dr. Holmes. In consequence of my book, an English edition is just printed. Do read it, especially the latter part of "Maria," the introduction and commencement of "Astræa," and the "Punch-bowl." He is a marvellous painter in words, and there is something about the whole man wonderfully large and fine. I have had from him letters as interesting as ever crossed the Atlantic. I have now on my bed (where I am writing) "Uncle Tom's Cabin," another American book; from which, I am told, Lord Carlisle said that he could not tear himself until he had completed it. I have only just begun it, but I doubt if it will equally enthrall me. I have no love for negro stories. Knowing many Americans and many West

Indians, I have learnt to consider emancipation as a question that has two sides. My friend, Mr. Webster (the greatest of living Americans), has lost his election because he was convinced that it would cause an immediate division of the Union, and, indeed, mar the whole prosperity of the republic; and when a man so wise resigns the hope of power, and risks his popularity from an honest conviction, they who have no personal means of judging would do well to pause.

I have not seen Lady Theresa's book. The friends (Lady Russell and her children) who have visited me every day for the last five weeks live in the splendid mansion erected by the second Lord Clarendon, and in which his greater father composed his history. Has any one ever written the history of Lord Chesterfield's viceroyalty of Ireland? Surely that wit, whose fame, as Hayley says (the same might be said of himself), "once rose too high, and now has sunk too low," was the best governor Ireland ever had. Only think, if an unpopular governor had been at the castle during the Scotch rebellion, what would have become of the House of Brunswick. Has that subject never tempted you? Adieu, dear Mr. Starkey. Say to Emily only that I am better than when I wrote to her, which is true. Your picture of the mock battle is very vivid. But our people do not understand these things; Louis Napoleon does. By the way, I have been reading his three volumes (in French, observe). The letter to his mother about the Cherbourg affair is most interesting; so is the bit on "Exile"; and the introduction to the "History of Artillery" is really like one of Southey's reviews. Ever yours, M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

Swallowfield, Saturday, Aug. 23, 1852.

Ah, dearest Emily, "well" will never again be my state. It was only last night that Mr. May could admit anything like real improvement. He and everybody regarded me as breaking fast—the faster for the good spirits, which consumed the oil of life so rapidly. Yesterday he said there was decided amendment, but it must always be—even if God see fit to prolong my days—an existence of the greatest care-

taking and precaution. It is next to impossible for me to be visible before two o'clock, and by eight I am wholly exhausted. I can hardly crawl from room to room, and never expect to walk the length of my little garden again—am lifted in and out of a very low pony-carriage, and from step to step up-stairs to bed. Then, in bed, I cannot stir, and have all the length of the spinal column, all round the loins, and across the shoulders, a soreness which renders every position painful. It is just as if I had been soundly beaten, so that, after a little interrupted sleep, I am more fatigued in the morning than when I went to bed at night. . . .

Visitor upon visitor till four or five o'clock, then a quiet drive through the lanes, or leaving cards at different doors. Sometimes friends come from London, or France, or America, and then I contrive to spend with them the six or seven hours that the railway permits; but there must be an interval of a day betwixt, for the exhaustion of such visits is too great for two consecutive days, and I believe Mr. May would be glad if I never saw anybody, but that is impossible; and I am quite sure that nine out of ten of my visitors think me actually well, for I get a bright color as I talk, and never in my life were my spirits so good. And this, dear Emily, is a great blessing—and for many blessings have I to be thankful: to be watched and prescribed for by such a man as Mr. May, nursed as I am by K. and Sam and the whole family of Russell, and visited and cared for by everybody around, gentle and simple, and to know of old friends like you, and new friends like Mr. Starkey at a distance. I should be most wicked if I were not most thankful. How I should like to see your garden! Will you give me some of your hollyhock seed, and any other seeds that you have to spare? It will be a great favor. I love hollyhocks. Lady Russell has in a broad gravel-walk that leads down her kitchen garden exquisite clumps of hollyhocks, twenty or thirty stalks of the same color tied up together, of which the effect is wonderfully rich; but they are all from pink to red, and, although I shall have seeds from her, I think they do best from a distance. Her garden is exquisite—I mean the kitchen garden. From an old cloistered court at the back

of the house you pass through iron gates and a rich grove-like orchard to other iron gates, beautifully wrought, and surmounted by a super-arch sculptured with fruit and flowers —almost covered with the Magnolia Grandiflora—into this old-fashioned kitchen garden of six acres, adorned on each side by wide flower-borders, with far within alternate holly-hocks and dahlias, backed up by espaliers, and finished by six or eight hot and green houses. I should say that the path through the orchard and to it is bordered by alternate cypresses and tree-roses, like an Eastern cemetery. I love that garden, to which the dear girls roll me in a chair. The house is very spendid, and the library one of the richest I have ever known.

I am in pain about this squabble with America; if it comes to fighting, it would seem to me like a civil war. Dear Mr. Fields says that the Americans are much amused with Daniel Webster's fish ebullition, on account of his known passion for fish in every way, for catching, cooking, and eating it. To have partaken of one of Daniel Webster's fish chowders at Marshfield forms an epoch in an American's life. I had three friends here, each of whom at different times had enjoyed that honor. It is a sort of soup, composed of cod and other materials, and the great statesman leaves whatever guests he may have to compose it with his own hands. Dear Mr. Fields says that, if it comes to a war, he will side with England, as becomes a man who has eaten, half a score of times, whitebait at Blackwall. I must tell you a conversation he had with Carlyle at some great dinner (you know what a blusterer Carlyle is).

"So, sir, ye're an American?" quoth the self-sufficient Scotchman.

Mr. Fields assented.

"Ah, that's a wretched nation of your ain. It's all wrong. It always has been wrong from the vera beginning. That grete mon of yours—George" (did any one under the sun ever dream of calling Washington George before?)—"your grete mon George was a monstrous bore, and wants taking down a few hundred pegs."

"Really, Mr. Carlyle," replied my friend, "you are the

last man in the world from whom I should have expected such an observation. Look at your own book on Cromwell! What was Washington but Cromwell without his personal ambition and without his fanaticism?"

"Eh, sir," responded Carlyle, "George had neither ambition nor religion, nor any good quality under the sun—George was just Oliver with all the juice squeezed out!"

I wish you had heard Mr. Fields tell this story. I have known many brilliant talkers, but never any one that approached him. It is the triumph of meekness and animal spirits without noise or abruptness—full of enjoyment, and perfectly unconscious. His conversation is for your pleasure and his own, without an idea of display. Another thing in Carlyle displeased him far more; every one knows that Emerson makes him a perfect idol, and it was thought that, if Carlyle cared for any one in the world, it was for Emerson. I have heard it said of them they are not only like brothers, but like twin-brothers. Well, remember that Emerson and Hawthorne both live at Concord, and you will appreciate the kindness of Mr. Carlyle's speech.

"Isna there a place called Concord near ye? What like is it?"

"A pretty little New England town," was Mr. Fields's answer, "of no political importance, but lively and pleasant as a residence."

"Pretty!—lively!—ye ken I had fancied it to be a dull, dreary place, wi' a drowsy river making believe to creep through it, slow and muddy and stagnant, like the folk that inhabit it."

So much for Mr. Carlyle, who has had the double misfortune of writing according to the humor—that is, the ill-humor, of the moment, without the slightest regard to consistency and truth, and to be surrounded by none but admirers, or listeners borne down by mere noise. In England his fashion is waning rapidly, and I have no doubt but that, like most overrated men, he will live to share the common fate of idols knocked down by his former worshippers in revenge of their own idolatry.

Mr. Fields is coming back in the spring, thank God! and

means to bring Mr. Hawthorne with him. He wants him to write a romance on Sefton Court, with which he has been more struck than any other thing he has seen in England. He also hopes to bring Dr. Holmes, my pet of pets. I transcribed in a letter to Mr. Hawthorne what dear Mr. Starkey said of his works. Mr. Holmes (to whom I read it) says that it is the finest criticism that has been made on his style.

Did you happen to see an account of a fête offered by Dr. Lee to Mr. Layard (the Nineveh discoverer) and Mr. Bethell?* I know neither of them, but they joined Mrs. Acton Tindal in a pressing invitation that I should be present—she not knowing of my illness. Of course I could not go, and Mr. Layard was, she says, very much vexed; but that was nothing. Old Dr. Lee, who seems, from riches and kindness, and his grand Elizabethan place, to be a privileged person, got hold of an old Quakeress, a sort of combination of Mary Wollstonecraft and Harriet Martineau, who made an harangue from a wagon on the rights, or rather wrongs, of women. The doctor wanted to put Mrs. Acton Tindal on the wagon also (a very sweet person, but rather a fine lady), and she and Mr. Layard had nearly run away before the banquet. Mr. Bethell stood it with the *sang-froid* of a Chancery barrister. I should certainly have joined the runaway party. God bless you, my dear love! Remember me to all old friends, Elizabeth and the baby included.

Ever yours, M. R. M.

On envelope—

Say everything for me to the dear Crowthers. How they recover! But then they are quiet, and they have each other to care for—a great inducement to getting well. How few people remain like them, married lovers to the end of their days!

MISS JEPHSON *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

Sept. 23, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—So at last our great duke is dead! How ridiculous it is in the French papers (the *Patrie* and

* Afterwards Lord Westbury.

the *Presse*) to say that he does not deserve lasting fame, because, as they pretend, he refused to draw his sword for *liberty*, which in his despite has triumphed everywhere—as if France was free! Does not this remind you of Æsop's fable of the "Mastiff and the Wolf"? and might not England, in reply to their boasting, point to their silenced press and the suppression of the Assembly, as the wolf did to the marks of the collar to which the chain was attached round the neck of the mastiff?

I read the other day, in a number of *Blackwood* which was lent to me, a story of Louis Napoleon which seems not improbable. It is stated that when he was in England some years ago, speaking of the amulet taken from the tomb of Charlemagne, which he then wore, he said that his wearing it might appear presumptuous, but that he had an internal conviction that he should one day be ruler of France; and in that case, though he had many friends in England whom he valued, it would be his object to accomplish what his uncle the emperor had planned, and that the conquest of England was his mission. Certainly the *Nation* gives him every encouragement which the promise of co-operation in Ireland can afford to fulfil it. . . .

I hope that Isabella is now quite well again, and that Emily continues to improve in health. You will, of course, see the illustrated edition of Miss Mitford's "Recollections." It must have been pleasant to her to have her taste for flowers so consulted and gratified by the Duke of Wellington. I am afraid she loves *les lis* too well, though I hope and believe not so well as *les roses*.

Ever, my dear Mr. Starkey, your affectionate sister,

EMILY E. JEPHSON.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

Sept. 24, 1852.

DEAR MR. STARKEY,—No! I have not read those works of Guizot. To tell the truth, it may be very meritorious, or at least very creditable, to read those philosophical historians, but it is very fatiguing; and there are certain cold, slow, dull writers, of whom Guizot and De Tocqueville may pass for

the types, over whom I cannot help yawning for the life of me. Moreover, I consider Guizot himself as a solemn coxcomb with a good deal of the hypocrite about him. He is never weary of a certain self-laudatory sort of preaching, and yet was there ever a more unscrupulous minister—a man more ready to help his master through the dirtiest work? He does not seem to know good from evil, for a friend of mine, who is also a friend of his, asked me in '48 if another friend of mine, who buys first-rate pictures, was likely to purchase one which M. Guizot had brought with him from Paris. "You may think that it is genuine," said she, "for I am desired by M. Guizot to say that it was presented to him by Queen Christina as a testimony of her gratitude for the part he took in the Spanish marriages." The Spanish marriages! So that, instead of being ashamed of having that put upon record, he actually used it to enhance the value of his share of the spoil. Moreover, I have not read the French criticism on Shakespeare. If you have read Alfred de Vigny's "Chatterton" (I mean the drama, not the story), you will see what those French people (he has translated "Othello," and is married to an Englishwoman) know of English manners. You will find a young lord setting out from Holborn with his hounds (you are to hear them behind the scenes) on a fox-chase, and promising Kitty to bring eight or ten foxes' skins, when he returns from killing them, to make her a muff and tippet! And I believe that, little as he knows the English tongue, Lamartine (also married to an Englishwoman) knows less. The romantic drama is too wide a subject for to-night. One is provoked over Victor Hugo, who might have been so great a poet—and who *is* so great a poet, in those volumes of "Lyrics," which are little known in England, but in which the best French critics hold that he will chiefly live, and, in my poor mind, quite rightly. Still, one is provoked with him, who might have been a very great dramatist, but for running into excesses which so diminish the power, even when they seem to heighten it. Still, "Le Roi S'Amuse" is a very great play.

With all his faults, Victor Hugo is incomparably the best and greatest of the romantic dramatists. The only one that

can compete with him is a person as different as possible, George Sand, whose "Claudie," a pastoral prose drama with a good deal of patois intermixed, is remarkable for the truth of the touch. It is free, too, from all that vile design of doing good, or making out this to be wrong and that to be right, which I hold with you, dear Mr. Starkey, to be the most fatal fault of all fiction nowadays. I am so glad to be fortified by your opinion, for I have waged twenty battles on the subject this winter and spring. It was the one fault of Miss Edgeworth that she wrote to a text. How much better she wrote without one she showed in "Belinda." All the greatest writers of fiction are pure of that sin—Chaucer, Shakespeare, Scott, Jane Austen; and are not these precisely the writers who do most good as well as give most pleasure? Ah, I must give off. Tell dear Emily Jephson that I had somewhere or other half a letter written to her, that I love her always, that I am getting better, that I do not believe myself in danger, and that I will write to her when I can do so without making my head throb or my hands burn. God bless you, dear friend! Ever yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

Oct. 25, 1852.

Did I tell you that my beloved friend Mr. Fields, the American publisher, had collected seven volumes of Mr. De Quincey's books dispersed over different magazines, and published them at Boston, and that, the last thing before sailing, he took down to him the author's profits on a sale of three thousand copies? Now this was the more noble and generous because to three letters from Boston conveying this offer Mr. De Quincey had sent no answer whatever, and, even when this admirable edition was published, Miss De Quincey only wrote; however, on his arrival, they were mutually charmed. Mr. Fields said that Mr. De Quincey was the most courtly gentleman he had seen in Europe; this he wrote to me, adding that he spoke of me with great enthusiasm, and proposed to write to me; but no letter came, however, and so I wrote to him. Yesterday I received a

very charming letter from Miss De Quincey, saying that her father had not for many years been so gratified as by my letter; that he had begun an answer, which was already as long as a good-sized pamphlet, but that she, knowing him of old, thought it likely that some time might elapse before it was sealed and delivered, and therefore sent hers as a precursor.* I think his prose the finest of any living writer, and I find that most judges of style are of my opinion.

Mrs. Browning has had a recurrence of cough, which prevented her from attending the christening of Alfred Tennyson's boy. It is called Hallam Tennyson, and Mr. Hallam stood in person, which is right on both sides. You know, of course, that the lamented of the "In Memoriam" was the historian's son Arthur, that he was engaged to Miss Tennyson, and that after his death, and even after her marriage to another man, Mr. Hallam made her a large allowance. Arthur Hallam, though, would have been a prettier name. Mrs. Southey, also a sufferer from chest complaint, is shut up till June. I forgot to say that the Brownings have left London for Paris, where they will stay a week or two, and then proceed to Florence, Rome, and Naples. No doubt they will see the grand entry of the prince president into Paris.

Did I tell you that I have been deeply interested lately by the production of an oratorio called "Jerusalem" at Norwich. The composer is the brother of my beloved friend Hugh Pearson, Vicar of Sonning. It was a perfect triumph in the hall, and amongst the performers, but has not been done justice to by the press, because the author was a gentleman! Henry Chorley, who gives the tone to the musical critics, had the audacity to tell me so. I doubt if I shall ever forgive him. He, the composer, left the Bar, for which he was educated, because his passion for music overmastered him, and has now given himself to it heart and soul. An enormous audience in the most musical city in England was chained in breathless attention for five hours, often melted into tears by the pathos of the music, and carried away by

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* Printed on page 307.

its grandeur—and, because he was well-born and highly educated, common justice is denied to him.

Truly, of all the fine things that Louis Napoleon is doing for France, none, to my mind, is so valuable as the putting down of journalism! ! ! That vile engine, the press, is to genius of modern times what the rack was of old. I abhor it, not on my own account—for to me it is civil enough—but on the score of my betters.

God bless you both, dear friends! I shall write on the other side a MS. charade (not to be printed or copied, mind) by Catharine Fanshawe, which I have sent to Mr. Dillon. Ever most faithfully and affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

P.S.—Mrs. Browning is in a very bad way about being admitted to Florence. She doubts their letting her in; I am more afraid about their letting her out, on account of her book. I am expecting, on Tuesday, Bayard Taylor, the great American traveller and a very charming poet. Those are his letters which are copied from the New York *Tribune* into *Bentley's Miscellany*. He is only five days in England, and gives me one. On the 27th he embarks for India, China, Japan, and so homeward by the Pacific. He is still quite a young man—under twenty-eight—and a great friend of dear Mr. Fields. To-day I have a letter from the Whittington Club, begging my name to a subscription for a monument to Thomas Hood. His poems are his best monument; so it is rather to the credit of England than for his sake that one subscribes. Poor as I am, I could not refuse myself the luxury of giving ten shillings, and I am sure that, if everybody has the courage to give small sums, they will raise the £150 that they want. They have nearly the sum already. The movement will be made public in a few days. They wanted influential names first. This *is* a pamphlet, dear friend, *à la* De Quincey. But I have so many letters to write and people to see that I don't know when I may write again. Let me know how you are, dear Emily.

MISS FANSHAWE'S CHARADE.

Come, take a chair,
And set it there,
  Farther from the door.
Pray, pray,
Don't say nay,
  Eat a little more.
My first is said,
My sĕcond's red,
  My whole I'm sure you know.
It's cousin Pat,
And brother Mat,
  Aunt Jane and uncle Joe.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LETTER FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY.—POETRY.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

Oct. 25, 1852.

A LETTER from me to dear Emily Jephson, dearest Mr. Starkey (or rather to Emily and company) will reach you before long—a letter which is almost a book.

Do you know an Irishman, whose early books I used to read to my dear father, to our mutual delight—Mr. Lever? I have lived so much among sportsmen that I enjoy many books which women in general find *caviare.* Then I am told that the man is a constant spring of humor and good-humor. Hablot Browne, the artist, to whom both Dickens and he owe so much, told me once that he spent three weeks with him in a most retired place in Belgium, and that his powers of amusement never flagged—a great contrast to Mr. Dickens himself, who is, I believe, not amusing at all. I have never seen either; but Mr. Lever and I interchanged tender messages, being each of us surprised and pleased to find that the other relished our books. All the illness in the world never alters my good spirits. . . .

Always most affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

Nov. 6, 1852.

Encouragement and praise are certainly, dearest Emily, the most unmerciful taskmasters of this world, and they have done their office with me, or, rather, are doing it, so that, tired out with an attempt at walking, I sit down to write to you by way of refreshment instead of going to bed. You will not wonder if the letter betray some signs of the

weariness of the limbs. Before I forget it, Kindred is the word—kind-red. How, having once hit upon the solution, could you doubt? It seems to me as a charade the very best that I ever encountered. Praed's, excepting for their matchless grace, are generally bad—always excepting "Donkey," which was written to illustrate a beautiful engraving from a Spanish picture: a young lady, sitting on one of those creatures, which in Spain lose their vulgarity, her veil floating around her, and her bridle-rein held by a gallant cavalier.

This mention of Spain reminds me of Bayard Taylor, who sailed for Gibraltar last week, intending to travel all over Spain, and then to proceed to India, China, and Japan, and so home by the Pacific. He spent Tuesday here, and I find that I was mistaken in thinking him a working-man. (Stoddard is so, and it was pleasant to hear the enthusiasm with which his friend, Bayard Taylor, spoke of him). He is a person of no common learning, an excellent classical scholar, and speaking French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Arabic as well as his native tongue. He has visited spots in Central Africa that no European foot has trodden. Last winter he had little other society than that of a lioness, a panther, and two hyenas. The hyenas were to the last untamable, that is, treacherous and uncertain, but the lioness was, he says, as much attached to him as a Newfoundland dog, and so was he to her. He was long in Syria, and speaks of the Jews of Jerusalem as being still a most noble and beautiful race; so like the paintings of the great Italian masters that it seems as if they had sat to them yesterday. A very clever person, and a very remarkable one, is Bayard Taylor, and, I doubt not, as good as he is clever—but yet I did not fancy him. Mr. Fields has spoilt me. He is shy and gawky, long rather than tall (you know what I mean), and with a total absence of that strange, delightful thing called charm—which is to conversation what scent is to the rose.

Talking of Jews, my beloved friend, Miss Goldsmid, has just sent me a volume of sermons by Mr. Marks, the minister of a synagogue established about ten years since, which give a very interesting specimen of the reformed Jewish

worship. Did you ever hear of it? Except that there were no practical abuses to sweep away, it is exceedingly like our Reformation, casting aside all lesser authorities, as Luther cast aside tradition, and abiding by the Old Testament wholly. It is still a religion of rites and symbols, but much less so than the unreformed worship. I wish you knew Miss Goldsmid. She is by far the greatest woman that I have ever known. Even her appearance is a complete triumph of mind over body, for she would be absolutely plain in face if it were not for the fine intellectual expression and the sweetness of the eyes; and clumsy in figure but for the noble and dignified carriage, which would beseem a queen. Possibly this may proceed, however, from a certain habit of power. The riches of her father are past all count. He once told a friend of mine that he had seven large estates in England which he had never seen, and she herself has from an uncle four thousand a year, which is, of course, pocket-money in her father's house, and used, I have no doubt, for the noblest purposes. I wish I could show you her only literary effort — a translation of other Jewish sermons from the German of Dr. Solomons — worthy to be Christian discourses in their spirit of charity and brotherly love; and so finely rendered that William Harness, after reading one to me, said that he could not detect one symptom of translation, and that he only wished she would undertake (being a most perfect Hebrew scholar) that which is so much needed—a good Jewish version of the Old Testament. I am afraid that her father, who in liveliness and energy much resembled his friend, Lord Brougham, is breaking fast.

The poem that I enclose is from one of my chief spoilers, Mr. Bennoch, a most brilliant person, and one who illustrates the character of this age. He is the head of a great Manchester house, a man with a very large fortune, with a sweet wife, and no children. He is a leading man in the Common Council, intending, I suppose, one day or other to represent the city, being, I am told, a very fine speaker. But his residence is at Blackheath, where he exercises an almost boundless hospitality, and does more good than anybody I know. His conversation is most brilliant. He has

travelled over the geater part of Europe and America, and I need hardly tell you that, as a poet, he is equalled by very few. To me the delicious rhythm of those verses, their truth, and their healthiness is delightful; more delightful still is the transparent clearness of those lovely stanzas, most delightful of all the rare fact that he thinks nothing of his own great talent, but is often throwing off his whole heart into sympathy for others. He comes here, I think, at least once a month—often more frequently. Did I tell you that Marianne Skerritt told me that the most remarkable book at Windsor was a Gramont, richly and extensively illustrated by George IV., certainly the only English king since the Stuarts who had any taste.

Heaven bless you, dear love. This is really a volume.

Ever yours, M. R. MITFORD.

Mr. Bennoch published a volume of poems, and the lines enclosed to Miss Mitford seem to have been the following, which have been found among her papers:

Blackheath Park, Sept.

SMALL THINGS.

I dare not scan the precious things,
The humblest weed that grows,
While pleasure spreads its joyous wings
On every breeze that blows.
The simplest flower that hidden blooms,
The lowest on the ground,
Is lavish of its rare perfumes,
And scatters sweetness round.

The poorest friend still bears his part
In life's harmonious plan,
The weakest hand may have the art
To serve the stalwart man.
The bird that clearest, highest sings
To greet the morning's birth,
Falls down to drink with folded wing
Love's rapture on the earth.

From germs too small for mortal sight
Grow all things that are seen,
Their floating particles of light
Weave Nature's robe of green.

The motes that crowd the sun's warm rays
  Build sky, and earth, and sea,
The glorious orbs that round us blaze
  Are motes to deity.

Small duties grow to mighty deeds,
  Small words to thoughts of power,
Great forests spring from tiny seeds,
  As moments make the hour.
And life, with all its ebbs and flows,
  Howe'er its course be driven,
Like odor from the breathing rose
  Floats evermore to heaven.

FRANCIS BENNOCH.

When in England Mr. Fields stayed with Mr. Bennoch, and introduced him to Miss Mitford. He was already known to her through his poetry, and visited her for several years up to her decease. She assigned to him the arrangement of her dramatic volume.

MISS JEPHSON *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

Nov. 15, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—I have part of an old letter of Miss Mitford's to send you. She wrote it when she hoped that Mr. Bentley would let her have engravings from Mr. Lucas's last portrait of her, one of which she intended to give me. The letter was laid aside *en attendant* the engraving, and forgotten for some time. Speaking of her favorite little boy, she says:

"By a strange coincidence this fair, golden-haired Saxon boy, with his blue eyes like two stars, the darkest, brightest blue eyes, and his complexion of lilies and roses, is in the whole contour of his head and face exactly the image of Louis Napoleon. The nose at present differs, of course, and the moustache, but the whole head and brow, the shape of the face, the moulding of the mouth and chin so unlike a child, are (in a fine bust of the prince president, brought to me by Mr. Fields) an actual fac-simile of this boy's countenance—of course the child's head is most remarkable. Mr. Fields brought me also a companion bust—the other great man of France, Béranger, most genial and venerable and beautiful

—and the two memoirs of Louis Napoleon. Mr. Fields, who saw much of him, and was close to him for two hours at a ball at the Tuileries, is quite as enthusiastic about him as Mrs. Browning and I. So is dear old Lady Stanley, who was here yesterday. Mr. Fields says that he never saw such manners in his life, such dignity, such courtesy, such simplicity, such grace. Very handsome he calls him, much handsomer than those beautiful prints and that exquisite bust. He says it is a head so pale and earnest, so full of thought and feeling, that he should have stopped to watch it anywhere. The figure is eminently dignified and graceful, slight and easy. He is the best horseman in Paris, and has the finest foot and hand; moreover, he never forgets a benefit, and is just as simple and unaffected as he *was* twenty years ago—not changed at all, so say all who knew him then. I heard a charming anecdote of him the other day from a Bath lady, Professor Solly's sister. A friend of hers, a lady of rank, was placed next him at some great fête. He was most courteous, but reserved and silent, and she wanted to hear him talk. At last she remembered having been in Switzerland some years back, and having received kindness and attention from Queen Hortense. She mentioned this to him with admiration and gratitude. He turned to her at once, 'Ah, madame, vous avez connue ma mère!' She stayed some months at Paris, loaded by Louis Napoleon with the many attentions and distinctions which his position permitted him to show her, and, whenever she attempted to thank him for his kindness, he stopped her at once by exclaiming, 'Ah, madame, vous avez connue ma mère!'

"I hope to send you with this an engraving of Mr. Lucas's exquisite picture, which I have given to Mr. Fields. Mr. Bentley wanted to purchase it of Mr. Lucas, who would not sell it, but presented it to me; and I gave it at once to the person in the world who is likely to value it most, from distance and from affection; for really he treats me as the prince president would have treated his mother, if she had lived to be old. He is not, however, to carry it to America until Mr. Lucas shall have accomplished his design of painting a whole-length of me in his studio, because, in case of my dying be-

fore that plan be executed, he could still make a full-length from that portrait. At present it is in the hands of the engraver, who is retouching the plate, so that (unless Mr. Bentley repent his promise) I hope to have for my friends a better engraving than that in the magazine. Did I tell you what an avalanche of kindness has come to me from America? President Sparks and his lady want me to go there for two or three years, and live with them in their house and mine; and Longfellow, Hawthorne, Holmes — all the eminent persons have written to me, actually to me; some letters for me addressed to Mr. Fields are quite delightful from the warm-heartedness and the respect."

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

Swallowfield, Dec. 17, 1852.

I have just received, dearest Emily, a very beautiful book from America—from New York this time, not from Boston —"The Homes of American Authors." The first thing that strikes one is the cosy and comfortable manner in which our brethren over the water are housed. Nothing can be prettier than most of the houses, and the frontispiece, the interior of Mr. Everett's library, would be superb in the country seat of an English nobleman. I never can understand how these people come by their money. Edward Everett, for instance, the person in question, has really gone the *vole* in point of employment. One of his avocations was the having been for four or five years a preacher at one of their churches, and, although he has been subsequently minister from the United States in England, yet their highest embassies are so poorly paid by the republic that I have always heard that their diplomatists lost money by their functions. I suppose it is all right, but one cannot look at that lordly apartment, with its splendid bookcases, pictures, and busts, without wondering how such wealth came to the poor student.

There is no end to the contrasts in America. Bayard Taylor was telling me the story of a young poet of the name of Stoddard, still under thirty. His father was the captain of a small merchantman, which, with all the crew, himself

included, was lost in the North Sea, leaving the only child so young, and the widow so poor, that (a most singular instance in the States) he had no more time for schooling than served him to learn to read, and taught himself to write some years after. He supported his mother by making moulds for iron castings; so he continued for a long while, in spite of most feeble health, until some of his poems becoming known enabled him to add the earnings of his head to the labors of his hands. Now the marvel of this is that this poor lad—an American, too—not only shows the highest genius—other low-born youths have done that—but a degree of taste and refinement rarely matched in modern poetry. More than that, some of his smaller and less powerful verse has about it an aroma of fashion and high breeding absolutely marvellous. Read these two stanzas, for instance; they have the perfume of a court:

> You know the old Hidalgo
> (His box is next to ours)
> Who threw the prima-donna
> The wreath of orange-flowers;
> He owns the half of Aragon,
> With mines beyond the main,
> A very ancient nobleman
> And gentleman of Spain.
>
> They swear that I must wed him,
> In spite of yea and nay,
> Though uglier than the Scaramouch,
> The spectre in the play;
> But I would sooner die a maid
> Than wear a gilded chain,
> For all the ancient noblemen
> And gentlemen of Spain.

He has written innumerable poems of far higher merit, but is not this wonderful for its high-bred air as coming from a maker of moulds for iron castings across the Atlantic? Did I tell you of the magnificent stanzas on the death of Daniel Webster, and that Daniel Webster was buried in full-dress like Napoleon? One thing I am sure I did not tell you, for it has only just happened—that I had the pleasure of telling Mr. Hawthorne through Mr. Fields (for we do

not regularly correspond, and our tender messages pass through that medium) that a Russian literary man of eminence has translated his "House of the Seven Gables" into Russian, and is printing it feuilleton-wise in a newspaper. One likes to send such a little bit of news as that. Also, dearest Emily, I forget whether I told you Mr. Bennett's "Death March" is the best poem I have seen on the Duke of Wellington, although that is not saying much. For fear that I did not, I enclose you a copy now. The author spent two or three days here this week. . . .

I had a long letter from Marianne Skerritt the other day giving an account of Count Walewski's arrival at Osborne under a royal salute to receive the Queen's recognition of the Emperor. Marianne is as enthusiastic on the subject as I am, and says, "He is the most extraordinary man I ever heard of!" What a fairy tale it is! You know, I suppose, that Count Walewski is the natural son of the first emperor by a Polish lady so often mentioned in the memoirs. Ten years ago he was splendidly handsome; now he is becoming almost too stout. The mother was exquisitely beautiful, and he took more after her than his illustrious father, except in the general look of his head. Have you ever read "Esmond"? William Harness (a friend of the author's) says, "I hate it." James Payne says, "I took it with me into the Theological Halls, and listened to the professor by preference." I dislike all the love parts exceedingly, and I feel it tiresomely long, and I dissent from much of the criticism, but bits are good, especially the "Mock Spectator."

Heaven bless you both, my dear friends. Love to the Crowthers and Elizabeth. (I wish our affair were over.)

Ever affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

Jan. 12, 1853.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—Here is a delightful letter from dear Miss Mitford. She is like lavender, the sweeter the more it is bruised. How wonderful are her spirits and energy after such an accident! You see that your letter has

not vexed her, though it has not converted her; *that* I believe is impossible. What strange inconsistency there is in being so tenacious of the civil rights of citizens as to hold that Mahometans, Jews, and Hindoos as citizens have a claim to sit in an English Parliament, while she applauds the French for choosing a ruler who has deprived them of the right to speak, or, I believe, to travel from one part of France to another with freedom. . . . I am glad she is thinking of a second series of "Recollections." She cannot be idle; it would be death to her. Only think of four hundred volumes of French books! Belinda's twelve French romances richly gilt were nothing to it.

Enclosure:

To-day, my very dear Emily, brought me your dear letter, and one equally charming from dear Mr. Starkey. You must send this to him, for reasons which you will soon discover. Ah, you little know the plight of your poor old friend! Nearly three weeks ago (I sat writing on Saturday night)—last Monday fortnight—I had a most serious accident—an overturn;* I was thrown violently from my little pony-chaise on the hard road in Lady Russell's park; no bones were broken, and nothing hurt but myself; but the nerve of the side—especially that called the *circular* nerve, which goes round the shoulder-bone—and the nerves of both hips were so much bruised and lacerated, and the shock of the system was so great, that even ten days after the accident Mr. May could not satisfy himself that there was neither fracture nor dislocation until he made a most minute and searching examination, and I am writing to you at this moment with my left arm bound tightly to my body and no power of raising either foot from the ground. I am lifted into bed, and lifted out of bed, and lifted up in bed, and cannot, do what I may, effect the slightest change of posture: the muscular power of the lower limbs seems completely gone. Mr. May says that this accident has fallen upon the person in the world who, from previous feebleness and neuralgic affection, was

* This is her second overturn in a pony-carriage; she escaped with less hurt from the first.—E. JEPHSON.

most likely to feel it severely, but that he still entertains hopes that I may be restored to the state (such as it was) in which this mischance found me. So much for the bad; now for the consolation. Nobody else was hurt, nobody to blame; the two parts of me that are quite uninjured are my head and my right hand. I had just got four hundred volumes of French books. K. is safe in bed, and Sam is really everything in the way of help that a man can be, lifting me about, and wheeling me about, and directing a stupid old nurse and a giddy young maid with surprising foresight and sagacity. I need not tell you how kind everybody is: poor Lady Russell comes every day through mud and rain and wind (for you are not to imagine that you had all the storm to yourselves; she had above a hundred trees blown down in her park; among the rest an oak of remarkable beauty, belonging to an avenue cut down when Lord Clarendon built the present mansion, had his noble head fairly taken off—a broad-browed oak such as Scott describes in the opening of "Ivanhoe"). Everybody comes to me, everybody writes to me, everybody sends me books. Mr. Bentley has done me good by giving me something to think of, in writing no less than three pressing applications for a second series of "Recollections," and, although I am forbidden anything like literary composition, and even most letter-writing, yet it is something to plan and consider over. I shall (if it please God to grant me health and strength to accomplish the object) introduce several chapters on French literature, and am at this moment in full chase of all Casimir Delavigne's ballads. Do you know them? They are of matchless beauty, which he seems never to have suspected, for a very few are printed in his "Poésies," the rest being scattered here and there; one which I read you eight years ago, of which the refrain is, "Chez l'Ambassadeur de France," I especially want—but indeed I want them all. Also do you know the great satirical poet, Auguste Barbier? Him I have—I mean his works—but I want his recent personal history. The last thing I heard of him was his being bought off by Louis Philippe. I almost suspect that he must be dead, for else we should have heard of him rampant under Ledru-Rollin, and sent about

his business by Napoleon ; for I am sorry to say that he was a great anti-Napoleonist, so far as the old Emperor was concerned. But he was a very great satirical poet for all that. Of course I shall be obliged to leave out lines and bits of lines in every stanza of his ; for those Frenchmen call things by very plain names, just as much as our English writers did in the Augustan age of Queen Anne.

This brings us to "Esmond." Had I read it when I wrote to you? It seemed to me, besides the disgusting love-story, very long and tedious, and full of commonplace and very false criticism—preferring Addison to Steele, and decrying that wonderful master of English style, Bolingbroke. All the best judges seem to dislike the book—at least, all who have mentioned it to me. John Ruskin is a man of a different sort. In his first passage he breaks away from all models, and produces morsels of word-painting that it would be difficult to exceed. Then he is so conscientious a writer. For the last volume of the "Stones of Venice," which he expects to finish in March, and which, his father says, will be much finer than the first, he spent above a year sketching and measuring upon the spot. By the way, he has a great contempt for the modern Italians. He wrote to me last summer that the women's heads were good for nothing but to stick flowers in, and the men's to hang beards to ; and, at the bottom of her heart, I expect Mrs. Browning to have the same feeling. Over and over she has said of them to me, "My Italians are too soft." That book, the "Casa Guidi Windows," is a book without convictions—one feels that as one reads it. She took up the subject because she had a mind to be an Italian George Sand, and because it was something to write about, and that's all. Tell Mr. Lever that there are few people in the world to whom I feel more grateful than to him. My father, who was no literary man, but whose taste was about the surest that I have ever known, found no pleasure during the last half-dozen years of his life but in listening to my reading. Besides the best comedians and natural history, I used to find great difficulty to get books that he would listen to. Of writers of fiction, he had only pleasure in Smollett and Fielding, Scott, Miss Austen,

the "Pickwick Papers," some of Mr. James's works, and Mr. Lever's. I think, of all modern novels, he liked "Harry Lorrequer," "Charles O'Malley," and "Jack Hinton" best. He used to say (and I am entirely of his mind) that nobody but a gentleman could have written them. He was a great sportsman, and I, who have lived amongst fox-hunters and coursers all the days of my life, feel how much health and power and manliness the habit of field-sports gives to a writer. Besides which, he is so genial an Irishman! By the way, dear Mr. Starkey, what is the feeling in Dublin about Mr. Kirwin? In London I am told that the impression is decidedly that there was nothing like proof of the murder; and that was decidedly mine on reading the report of the trial in the *Times*, before anybody had written a word about it. I doubt the screams being heard that distance, and am fully persuaded that the fact of the man's being a wretched husband influenced all the people concerned—the witnesses, the judge, and the jury.

Now for a little American news. Hawthorne, who was an old class-fellow of the new President at college, and has been his neighbor at the little town of Concord (where, by the way, Emerson has also lived for the last two years), sees Mr. Pierce every day, and will certainly hold high office under him. Three years ago he was literally starving. Two or three of my correspondents, of different politics, all say that no European can ever imagine the scramble for place and the dirty intrigues which take place every few years under the model republic. Have not the French done wisely to select for themselves a man whose name and whose high ability will preserve them from such struggles? They say that *he* greatly dislikes the Tuileries. His health is not strong, and the garden of the Elysée was a comfort, and almost a necessity to him. Of our new ministry, I have heard one result from the very highest authority, Miss Goldsmid. She says that the admission of Jews to Parliament is now certain. The death of the duke will make a great difference in the Lords, and other circumstances besides the coalition ministry render the carrying the measure certain. This prospect has greatly revived her father, who was dying of

heart-complaint. He was the real man of the movement from first to last: had given it half the energies of a most energetic life, and it is well that he should see the cause triumph at last. I go with him entirely, holding that every citizen has a claim to enjoy civil rights, were he Mahometan or Hindoo.

And now, dear friend, I think I have disobeyed Mr. May quite enough. God bless you both! The sight of that storm must have been almost grand enough to have made amends for the discomfort.

Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

In a letter, dated January 19, 1853, Miss Jephson alludes to the project of publishing her great-uncle's letters:

The transcribing parts of Miss Mitford's letters has been quite a pleasure to me, bringing back so vividly the recollection of the happy time at Binfield when I received them—the visits to Three Mile Cross, from which we were separated by about ten or twelve miles of beautiful park-like country, which once had been part of Windsor Forest, and her visits in the long summer days to Binfield Park, where there was so much to see that interested her, pictures and prints—some of the latter had belonged to Mr. Malone, and were valuable—and Sir Joshua's portraits of Dr. Johnson and of dear Lady Sunderland, so like and so beautiful.* If you like, I will send you an extract in every letter from Miss Mitford's exhaustless stores.

I do not quite recollect how it was that the plan of *the* book died away, but you will see that doubts of its success were stealing upon her, and then there was the *necessity* of finishing her play, and other engagements, which had been interrupted by this new project. As years passed away, her father's illness and writing for his support occupied all her thoughts and time.

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* Miss Mitford seems to have become acquainted with Lady Sunderland through Miss Jephson before 1852.

Extract from a letter of Miſs Mitford here copied by Miſs Jephson.

"What I contemplate is asking Mr. Colburn if he would like such a book, if he thinks it would answer, and what he would give for it, and not binding myself to him, with an understanding that it might come out in the winter or spring of 1832; this would give us time to look for more letters and more *jeux d'esprit*. Did you find the confessions of Jean Baptiste Couture? What I think is this: if we could make one volume of the life, correspondence, and desultory poems and prose, and another of the plays, the four tragedies which we have, and of the farces as many as we can find, to be published either together or as Colburn might choose."

Extract from another letter.

"Mr. Talfourd says that he will apply to Colburn whenever I like, but that I must give Otto the precedence. He has got your uncle's plays, and has read the 'Count de Narbonne' and the 'Italian Lover,' which he thinks full of good writing, but not very dramatic. There is, however, little doubt of Colburn's taking the work. Single-speech Hamilton's letters, and your father's sketch of the life, will be invaluable acquisitions. I have desired W. Harness to ask Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons if they can give us any help, which I think not unlikely, especially in the affair of the 'Conspiracy.'"

Extract from another letter.

"W. Harness certainly underrates the plays. His taste is a little warped by his love of the poetry of Joanna Baillie's style. I would rather far have written the last act of the 'Italian Lover,' with its fine conception, its admirable conduct, its passion, and its intensity, than all the plays on the passions put together. The fact is that Joanna Baillie had imbued her mind with the fine rich style of the old writers, and had herself a fancy full of poetical imagery; but she entirely wanted construction, had less of character than Mr. Jephson, and had not an idea of that real and great thing, stage effect (of course I do not mean pageants and proces-

sions), but the turns of fortune and development of story in which Shakespeare is quite as unrivalled as in his individuality of character and poetry of diction. If Mr. Jephson's plays be less poetical than Joanna Baillie's, they are more eloquent, and eloquence seems to me far more akin to passion than mere beauty of imagery, however delightful. I am quite sorry that William is not coming, that we might fight the battle out. One proof is that Mr. Jephson's plays did act successfully (in spite of the recumbent statue), and that Joanna Baillie's do not. Do write for the Life and for Horace Walpole's letters—I can't bear the thought of giving up the scheme."

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

Jan. 31, 1853.

Thank you earnestly, dear Mr. Starkey, for your most kind note and for Mr. Lever's, which I venture to retain. I, like him, set little store by praise (always excepting general popularity)—I mean that I set little store by individual praise, except it come from a quarter for which I have myself a considerable value, and Mr. Lever is of those few. I know no writer whose works are so unmistakably those of a gentleman. They say that the Irish gentleman is the ideal of that word in mind and manner, and really in his books there is the confirmation of the theory. The English novels of these days seem to me the more detestable the one than the other—Dickens all cant (Liberal cant, the worst sort) and caricature; Thackeray all cynicism, with an affectation of fashionable experience; and the lady-writers, the Miss Jewsburys, the Miss Lynns, and *tutte queste*, emulous of the passion and doing of George Sand, without her grossness, but also without her genius and her beauty.

When you come to know me, you will be amused at your own fears about my spirits. I am a very proverb of cheerfulness. William Harness says that, so long as I breathe, so long shall I talk all manner of gayety. Mr. May complains that he never can tell how I am, because my conversation is so deceiving. My maid K. orders people away, because, so long as I have company, I wear myself out with my good spirits. High animal spirits, that great gift of God, have

sustained me through a life of anxiety and labor, hardly perhaps to be paralleled in the long list of poor authors. The fact is that you are probably amongst the many who, never having experienced or witnessed the state, are happily ignorant how very much worse than a broken bone, or than two or three broken bones, is a severe injury to the principal nerves of the principal joints—how very much more painful, and how infinitely more tedious and more difficult to cure. For about a month my left arm was tied up in one shawl slingwise, and bound lightly to my body with another, to prevent the terrible pain which the slightest motion sent upward and downward through the limb and the whole side. That is now going on favorably, and there is little doubt but the use of the arm will be slowly and gradually recovered. But the lower limbs are even now (above six weeks after the accident) so affected that I can neither stand nor put one foot before the other. I am lifted into bed, and out of bed, and up in bed; cannot turn when there, nor make the slightest motion; have quite for the present lost all muscular power, retaining great and constant pain; and Mr. May says that until warm weather, until the spring shall be fairly set in, I must continue as I am—just lifted into a great chair, and wheeled to the fireside, without even attempting to leave the room. You will admit that this terrible helplessness, attended as it is with constant sleeplessness, is no fanciful evil —everybody is astonished at my good spirits. But these injuries to the principal nerves are most serious. Only last week a near neighbor of mine, a young and active man, in a fall from his horse in hunting, bruised one of the nerves connected with the spine, and was for twenty-four hours in imminent danger of lockjaw. He is now recovering.

Adieu, dear friend. I am now hunting for a ballad of Casimir Delavigne's, of which the refrain is "Chez l'Ambassadeur de France." If you meet with it, do not fail to send it to me. It is short.

Ever faithfully yours,

M. R. Mitford.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

March 8, 1853.

I don't know, dearest Emily, whether I told you that Mr. Huddleston, the head of one of our great Catholic families, was in despair at the Emperor's marriage. He had followed the Empress from Spain to Paris when he was recalled by the illness of his father. The father died, and he was about to return to France and throw himself and his £40,000 a year at her feet, when the Emperor stepped in and carried off the prize. A friend of mine saw a portrait of her on horseback at his house last week. Lady Russell, herself a Frenchwoman, hears from Paris that one of the libels they wish suppressed was based on the statement that the Spanish grandee who married the Empress's mother was a most wretched, deformed little creature. I shall now transcribe for you a passage concerning her in Mrs. Browning's last letter. "I wonder if the Empress pleases you as well as the Emperor. I approve altogether, none the less that he has offended Austria, in the mode of arrangement; every cut of the whip in the face of Austria being a personal compliment to me—at least, so I consider it. Let him head the democracy, and do his duty to the world, and use to the utmost his great opportunities. Mr. Cobden and the Peace Society are pleasing me infinitely just now in making head against the immorality (that's the word) of the English press. The tone taken up towards France is immoral in the highest degree, and the invasion cry would be idiotic if it were not something worse. The Empress, I heard the other day from the best authority, is charming, and good at heart. She was educated at a respectable school at Bristol, and is very English, which does not prevent her shooting with pistols, leaping gates, driving four-in-hand, or upsetting the carriage when the frolic requires it—as brave as a lion, and as true as a dog. Her complexion is like marble, white and pale and pure; her hair light, inclining to sandy—they say she powders it with gold-dust for effect—but her beauty is more intellectual and less physical than is commonly reported. She is a woman of very decided opinions. I like all this—don't

you?—and I like her letter to the Préfet, as everybody must. Ah! if the English press were in earnest in the cause of liberty, there would be something to say for our poor, trampled-down Italy—much to say, I mean. Under my eyes is a people really oppressed, really groaning its heart out; but these things are spoken of with indifference." So far Mrs. Browning. She tells me also that her husband's play, "Colombe's Birthday," is to be produced at the Haymarket in April, with Miss Helen Fawcett that was (I forget her new name) as the heroine. Also she is very curious on the subject of the American rappings. So I have written to Mrs. President Sparks, whose husband has just sent me two capital trimmings of Lord Mahon, who criticised the great edition of "Washington's Writings," which he, the president, had brought out, and who is (I mean Mrs. President), of all my American correspondents, the one most likely to enter heart and soul into the rapping question. I don't suppose Dr. Holmes or Mr. Fields believe any more of it than they do of the Cock Lane ghost.

N.B.—I send you also a scrap of James Fields's letter, just arrived to Mr. Bennoch, which he dutifully forwarded to me, and which I have of course returned. It is just exactly a bit of the man himself, who is, beyond all manner of doubt, the brightest piece of sunshine that ever came in my path. You see he has even taken Thackeray's fancy, who is anything but an enthusiast. If I could find it, I would also send you a letter from Paris, describing the wedding, and the exceeding beauty of the city, which is becoming more splendid from day to day; but that letter has gone astray among my wilderness of papers, and I can only tell you two nice pieces of news—that young Alexandre Dumas is said to be one of the persons incarcerated for libel, and that Lamartine is utterly ruined, for which one is sorry, with all his youth, and his age, and with his broken health. There must have been great extravagance, as there was with by far the greatest of those French writers, Balzac, and is with Dumas; for all three have earned immensely, and neither had any claims of rank, or of large families, or of anything except habits of luxury and expense to account for their profusion. Did I

tell you of a very interesting picture which Miss James happened upon in London last year. She was going to see a mutual friend of hers and mine, a very remarkable single woman, of the name of Crenering (?), who shares a large house with Mr. Phillips, the portrait-painter, in George Street, Hanover Square. Whether she mistook the door, or whether she went purposely into one of Mr. Phillips's rooms, I don't know, but she found herself in front of a St. Cecilia picture —a most intellectual and spiritual-looking woman sitting at an organ, apparently absorbed by the music which she was producing from the instrument, but looking upward, and so attenuated that the spirit seemed about to leave the body. It was Lady Lovelace, as she last played the organ—her farewell to music—painted for Lady Byron. Nobody but the family had seen or were to see it.

Do you see the *Times?* and, if so, do you remember certain letters signed "An Englishman," abusing my dear Emperor? Those letters had a tone of authority which might have become not merely a judge or a bishop, but a cardinal or lord-chancellor. Well, they were written by an undergraduate at Oxford, a lad called Vernon Harcourt, whom our lad here, George Russell, whom his mother and I pet and scold all day long, talks of as his junior. I'm not sure that he was not his fag at Eton. I cannot tell you how much this has amused me. The letters were inflated and bombastic enough for Tom Thumb, but there was an air of grandeur about them which must have taken in the *Times*. What a fool the lad was not to keep his own secrets! God bless you, dear love! I'm no better.

Ever yours, M. R. Mitford.

Enclosed in the above letter is the following extract from a letter from Mr. Fields to Mr. Bennoch, February, 1853:

"Well, how are you all at Blackheath? Does the sun shine upon you and yours as usual? Are leaves flitting about your dwelling—I mean, the poetical ones? As the winter draws near its close I begin to look over the waves towards the English shore. I feel weary, and my dreams

are of lanes and cottages and railroad trains to Greenwich and Blackheath. I think I hear every morning the voice of Ellen warning me that it is seven o'clock. I shake hands with old Yankee friends and call them Bennoch, and Mackay, and Somers, and Riggs. I am continually ordering whitebait for dinner, in a land where such things are not; I talk of going to the Opera and the Princess's, and the people about me don't understand what I mean. I count my dollars and cents in pounds and shillings and pence, and the shopkeepers think I am mad—in short, the English fever has again laid hold of me. I am completely in its power. I do not dare say a word about 'going over the waters to Bennoch,' but I look at my partners with a woe-begone face every time the steamer leaves our port. The truth is, I fear Ticknor and Reed will never consent to my leaving again for Europe. We are all plunged lip-deep in traffic, and my presence here is most important. I hope and pray the spring may not pass without my walking down the Strand.

"Thackeray is having a fine reception in the States. He took quite a fancy to your humble servant, and when he left Boston wrote me the most friendly letter, accompanied by a splendid silver drinking-goblet as a memorial of our friendship.

"Do you often see Miss Mitford? That sad accident made everybody feel sad. Holmes, Hawthorne, and Longfellow deeply regretted it."

CHAPTER XXVII.

LETTERS FROM MISS MITFORD TO MISS JEPHSON AND DIGBY STARKEY.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

March 13, 1853.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—I have written two or three letters to dear Emily, and trusted to her habit of copying them for their reaching you. I do that with some American friends, and one dear, busy friend does so with Mr. Bennoch and myself. My excuse is always an overwhelming correspondence, and just now I have another reason for abridging writing as much as may be. My three months' confinement to one dusty, smoky room, and the quantity of ashes caused by perpetual fires has occasioned a weakness of the eyes, which startles me a little, although it will probably cease with the cause. For the rest I am no better, but, as far as pain goes, perhaps worse than before the late cold weather. However, the spring is really coming now, and I must wait its effects with patience. I rejoice in the amendment of Mr. Starkey. It has been a most trying season—between accident and illness not a family in this neighborhood has escaped.

Your outpouring of feeling on Mr. Layard's most interesting book is by far the most eloquent that I have met with—eloquence of truth and of heart, as well as of talent. Besides all that you say, it suggested to me the astonishing adaptability of different intellects to pursuits the most difficult, and apparently the most untempting: Cuvier collecting fossil bones, and re-creating the grisly monsters of a former state of existence; Layard delving extinct cities from the mounds of the desert; Dr. Hirsch deciphering lost languages to which there did not seem the slightest clew. These men seem born for their work. I heard of Mr. Lay-

ard last week. He is gone to Constantinople to join Lord Stratford—I suppose in some diplomatic capacity. Personally I do not know him, but he is much with a dear friend of mine, and we interchange messages. He seems to be different from what his doings would lead one to expect, a very refined and courtly person, shrinking from the slightest touch of ridicule, rather than the bold adventurer which one would look for in the man who gained every step of his great discoveries at the cost of a contest with the Arabs. They speak of him as a charming person, but this is the notion I have gained from several anecdotes. Mr. Justice Talfourd has sent me from Oxford (he mentioned it at Reading, where indeed he was so pressed by business that he could not get to me) a new tragedy, called the "Castilian," printed, but not published, and at present, to use his own words, "a very private sin, having only been given to eight or ten persons." It is more like "Ion" in the writing than either of his other plays, and is grounded on the Revolt of Toledo, under Don John de Padilla, in the early part of the reign of Charles V.

You must ask dear Emily for an interesting account of the Empress sent to me by Mrs. Browning. I enclose, at the risk of her also transcribing it, a curious instance of figures turning into a word, and that word a prophecy,* and I add a story I heard yesterday, that the Empress shot thirty-three brace of partridges one morning at St. Cloud, being, added my informant, in spite of that so sweet and charming a creature that any man might fall in love with her.

Adieu, dear friend. Ever yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

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* The numbers for the election of President of France in favor of Louis Napoleon were

FOR	AGAINST
7119791	1119

Look through the back of this against the candle or the fire, or any light.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

June 2, 1853.

Never dream of apologizing to me, dear Mr. Starkey, for fits of silence. Scott, in one of those charming introductory epistles to "Marmion" which are full of the common natural feelings, which, if expressed before, have never been half so well expressed, talks of pursuing a ramble with a friend sometimes in chat, sometimes in "jovial silence;" and I am sure that this feeling of entire liberty, whether in conversation or in correspondence—the not being expected either to talk or to write for civility's sake—is amongst the most enduring privileges of friendly intercourse. Besides, we hear of one another through dear Emily, who may be safely trusted to transmit whatever is worth telling from one to the other. I see that she has sent you Dr. Holmes's stanzas on Moore, which are so curiously like the writer they commemorate that one would think he had dictated them through a "medium," if the charming American were not a scoffer at the spirits and their rappings. So, indeed, are all my American friends, and they tell me that the thing is dying away across the Atlantic. In Italy they are better believers. Mrs. Browning tells me that Robert Owen of Lanark has been converted to a belief in the immortality of the soul by these spirit-rappings. Now, knowing Robert Owen, I think that he would most assuredly have been converted without them, for he, in spite of his crotchets, is a thoroughly kind and honest man, who has no interest in disbelieving a future state. Well, I doubt if you be rapping in Dublin, but of course you are table-turning. All the world is so employed, and that great *fait accompli* flourishes pre-eminently in Swallowfield. The young Russells are surcharged with electricity; the girls cannot take off a flannel petticoat but it crackles, or brush their hair in the dark but it emits sparks like a cat. Of course under their manipulation tables spin like teetotums. One thing, however, is curious. It had been held that any metal prevented the operation, and trinkets were discarded accordingly. The other night one of the young ladies, in the midst of the evolutions of a

rosewood table, suddenly proposed to remove their rings and bracelets; they paused for a moment to do so, and the table paused also, but the moment they replaced their thumbs and fingers on the wood it began turning again as rapidly as ever *the reverse way!* If anything could be more unaccountable than another where all is a puzzle, this manœuvre would seem so. I suppose it must be electricity, or magnetism, or some new fluid of which the agency has hitherto been unknown. Of the fact there is no doubting, nor of nervous people being far more charged with it than others.

I am still very lame, carried, or rather lifted, step by step up and down stairs and into bed, and unable to stir when recumbent, almost to move when seated. Besides this, I am all over as sore as if I were pounded in a mortar, and, although quite as cheerful as ever, yet paying for temporary excitement by exceeding weakness afterwards. In short, I am as infirm, as feeble, and as lively as it is well possible for a woman to be. I am got into the air, and I enjoy it so much that I cannot but hope that it must eventually do me good. It seems to me that never was the marriage of May and June, which is always the loveliest moment of the year, so beautiful as now. The richness of the foliage in our deep-wooded lanes, the perfume of the bean-fields, the luxuriant blossoming of all sorts of flowering trees. I have some lilacs of both colors, especially the white, which I would match against those of which Horace Walpole was so fond at Strawberry Hill. We have curious things, too, in our hedgerows—natural puzzles. Our hollies hereabout are almost trees, and one, whilst his fellows are covered with pale flowers, has retained all the coral berries which the birds ought to have eaten in the winter. Why is this?

Of all your exhibition the wisest part seems to me the picture-gallery. But I suppose anything is wise which carries people to Ireland and the fine scenery, which is worth all the exhibitions under the sun. If you have a command of French books read Sainte-Beuve's "Causeries du Lundi," charming volumes, full of variety and attraction in every way. Ever, dear friend, faithfully yours,

M. R. Mitford.

MISS MITFORD *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

July, 1853.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart, my dear and kind friend, for the great favor which you propose to do me, which you have done me, for the pleasure of seeing those two kind words in print will hardly equal that of seeing them in your own handwriting. Thank you again and again. We get choice in praise as we grow old, prizing it according to the estimation we set upon the praiser, and measured by that scale these lines have indeed a high value! I only wish that you were here, that an honest and warm grasp of the hand might tell the feelings of the heart. "Haydon's Life" has not yet reached me. The family wanted me to edit it (the actual editor is Professor Tom Taylor, the man of *Punch*), but the book will tell you why I refused. I knew poor Haydon quite well enough to be sure that there would be much that would hurt the feelings of many. At the time when I and others—my betters—as if by common accord, hailed him in sonnets, he held forth a promise in painting which he never kept. . . .

His conversation was singularly brilliant, fearless, bold, original, full of impulse, and of the keenest observation of character, dashed with a certain coarseness of accent too much in accord with coarseness of mind. The faculty he always wanted was taste, and that is an ominous deficiency, for surely taste is even more a moral than an intellectual quality. I am very curious to see that book. Before leaving the subject of Henry Chorley (of the *Athenæum*, you know), he told me that "Villette" is the actual experience of Miss Bronté. She went over to Brussels, becoming what he calls "an usher" in a Belgian school, and encountered most of the persons she describes. Strange persons they are — wonderful in these smooth days, and yet men and women after all. Mrs. Jameson is the incarnation of one of the worst things in this age, the spirit of cotorie. Oh, how wise Scott was in avoiding that snare!

I must tell you what has three times befallen me this last week. My maid K., in putting me to bed, burst into a

storm of exclamations, all referring to the candlestick; I looked, and saw nothing but a dingy caterpillar about half an inch long. It moved, and a little bright star of bluish greenish light was reflected on the silver. It was a glow-worm! We extinguished the candle, and the candlestick was sent to one of the grass-plots in front of the house, and in about ten minutes the beautiful insect had crawled out upon the turf. Four nights after, exactly the same thing occurred, and another glow-worm was found on one of the lower windows. We can only account for these visits to the candlestick by the circumstance of there being both nights a little jar of fresh-gathered pinks upon the table. But none have been found among the pinks in their own home, the garden, nor did I ever hear of a glow-worm indoors. Did you? K., who is full of pretty sayings, will have it that, now that I—always so fond of those stars of the earth—can no longer go to see them, they come to visit me. I am no better, and paid for the pleasure of two or three visits to me lately by never closing my eyes the night before or the night after their arrival. Neither can I rise from my seat, or stand, or walk, or turn in bed. It is a very wearisome and painful helplessness, but I bless God that I have many alleviations—there always are, I think, to every trial, if we will but look for them. Besides all this, I am much engaged, partly with correspondents who, not being dear friends, cannot be put aside.

May I ask you to lend this letter to dearest Emily? She will accept it as one to her. Adieu, dear friend.

M. R. Mitford.

Miss Mitford *to* Mr. Starkey.

Swallowfield, Aug. 18, 1853.

This is a note of adieu, dear Mr. Starkey, to you and dearest Emily, for I have concluded the agreement for the two works, and must abstain from all correspondence until both be completed. Although quite separate, the publications will, for advertising and bookselling reasons, appear nearly together. God grant me strength to do justice to myself and the publishers, who have behaved admirably through-

out. Haydon's book is the work of the year. It has completely stopped the sale of Moore's, which really might have been written by a Court newspaper or a Court milliner. You would have liked Haydon; you could not have helped yourself. Mr. Bennoch, who was here Saturday with the Kingsleys and Mr. Ticknor (I wish you had been of the party) said of him: "He seldom kept his promises to me, but he always tried to do so, which morally is the same thing." Was not this fine in Mr. Bennoch? He is a splendid person, full of talent and intelligence and genial pleasantry, but with a certain calm dignity, the fruit, I suppose, of constant right-doing. Hawthorne was to have come with them, but, being a personal and most obliged friend of the President (his post, nominally worth $2000, is really worth $5000), he thinks it right to obey the ordinance for consuls to stay in their places, so that he has not been in London yet, and will not come till the end of the month. Then I shall see him. I will tell him what you say. It is a fine and a just criticism. Mr. Ticknor himself and most superior men say that I shall like him. He will not do to be lionized, or even drawn out, but when he likes his company he comes out himself, and is often really brilliant. Mr. Ticknor says that the rappings have driven so many people to the madhouse that there is a question in the States of forbidding such practices by law. Mrs. Browning believes in them. She would have believed in the Cock Lane ghost.

The Bennochs came to me from Albury—that is, Tupper's house, near Guildford—and Martin Tupper, a singularly good-natured man, though I cannot read his books, had Alexander Smith down there during his stay in London. Besides an atrocious squint, which he cannot help, he was dirty to a degree quite incredible, discontented, and conceited, which he could. Mr. Tupper took him over that beautiful neighborhood, but he expressed no pleasure in anything; he praised half-a-dozen lines of his which he repeated, upon which the poet observed, "If I had known that you liked that passage, I would have left it out of the new edition." This is a fact. He did act upon this orig-

inal principle by cutting out bodily several lines praised by persons of taste, leaving those which went before and came after to join themselves as they could. He must be a little mad. At all events, his conduct at Albury lost him the patronage of Mr. Bennoch, who could and would have placed him in some commercial or manufacturing situation, where he would have had a decent competence, books, notice, and leisure to produce poetry, if the real thing were in him. There is an elder Tennyson, the third of the poet-brothers, who is about to print a volume—"better than Charles," Mrs. Browning says, "worse than Alfred." My reason for caring little about the mob of hack-writers to whom Mr. James belongs is their ignorance. They write, but they don't read. My most accomplished friends are Mr. Pearson, the Vicar of Sonning, the bosom friend of Arthur Stanley—no author—and Mr. Bennoch, who has "the faculty divine," but not time to put it on paper. You would soon get tired of authors if you saw much of them. I have just received a very beautiful book from one who forms an exception to the rule—John Ruskin's new volume of the "Stones."

This is an adieu to dear Emily also. God bless you both! Ever yours, M. R. M.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

April 23, 1854.

I thank you heartily, dearest Mr. Starkey, first for liking my book so well, and then for telling me so. Certainly the kindness with which it was received is something most unusual, and has cheered me like a mark of personal interest. The only coldish notice (the *Athenæum*) came from an intimate friend,* for whom, in his secret tribulation of having two plays damned in a fortnight, I had felt and expressed a warm sympathy! And even this notice was only coldish by comparison, so glowingly kind have been the rest. *Your* own share of the praise, dearest Mr. Starkey, gave me a far higher degree of pleasure on account of my value for you,

* Henry Chorley.

and I am particularly gratified by your approving the shorter stories. I myself had not read them for a dozen years until I saw them in the volumes, having been too ill to read the proofs, and distrusted them so much that when I found Mr. Colburn and Mr. Hurst (in whose hands both they and some of the plays were) would not let us publish the one without the other, I undertook "Atherton," unfit as I was for such an exertion,* in order to give some little value, some little body, to the work. I am so glad that you and Mrs. Starkey like it! The portrait is no more like Haydon's picture than it is like me. There is a wood-cut in last Saturday's *Illustrated News* which is better, and by far the best of the many scores that have been taken is a photograph from John Lucas's picture, colored by an eminent miniature painter, now in the possession of Mr. Bennet, the picture itself being in America.

You will like, in your kindness, to hear how I am. These east winds have been horribly against me. Mr. May has at last confessed that in that unhappy overturn the spine was seriously injured, which accounts at once for the total loss of muscular power in the body and lower limbs, and for the terrible pain of all the nerves of the back, especially those over the breast-bone and under the arms.

God bless you, dear friend!

Ever yours, M. R. M.

The following is enclosed, June 23, 1854, to Mr. Starkey for Miss Jephson:

I am delighted to hear again from you, my beloved Emily, above all to receive a letter so cheerful and so full of health, mental and bodily. It is very good in you to like "Atherton" so well. Some of the warmth in your praise is perhaps partiality, but then I do not wish that less. It is, however, sure that both by the press and the public that work has been received with an enthusiasm quite wonderful in this war time. They say that it is the only new work that

* "Atherton" has been called "Sunlight in Suffering."

has been in great request this spring; and such has been the demand that Mr. Mudie (who keeps a great circulating library in London) told my publisher that he had four hundred copies in circulation, and found them insufficient. This is a real success, and very pleasant to hear. Besides this, the letters I receive from the persons whom I most wish to please (you and Mr. Starkey, my dear Emily, among the first) have given me a gratification better, I hope, than vanity, with more heart in it and more thankfulness. The exertion, however, certainly did me much harm, and was greater far than would be gathered from the preface; since, according to my old theory and my old practice that without pains there is no real good writing, I think, for anybody, I am sure for me, I actually wrote almost every line of that story three times over, and, although much disfigured by misprints, since the original printer having failed early in the volume, it was delayed for three weeks and then hurried through the press in three days (again almost killing me), yet it owes to that care the appearance of ease which people are so good as to like in it. You, who take so niece-like an interest in my poor doings, will like to know that the scenery (allowing for some little embellishment of the hall and park) is true—at least, was so fifty years ago, when my father, mother, and myself went more than once to stay at the Great Farm, whose occupants (a Mrs. Hunt and her daughter) were very distantly related to my maternal grandmother. It was exactly the scene of affluent hospitality which I have described, and Mrs. Hunt was in person a character not unlike Mrs. Bell, whilst her daughter, an elegant woman, bore some resemblance to Mrs. Warne. They drove their close carriage, and Joseph was quite a real person. The name of the village was Lockinge, situated in the midst of the great Berkshire downs, about four miles from Wantage, and quite, I think, as beautiful a scene. The Hall belonged to Mr. Bastard, then M.P. for Devonshire, who, residing in that county, let the park to Mr. Hunt; and I well remember how I loved to take a book and sit in an old-fashioned, gloomy grotto under a wood-covered bank. The mother and daughter are both dead; her children have settled in America. The

last I heard of Lockinge was from the Duke of Devonshire, who came to see me on his way home from a visit he had been paying to the then occupant of the Hall—I think Sir Harry Martin. I wonder if he recognized the scenery! I only once saw it in the summer, when my father was on the grand-jury at Abingdon and left us there; but I was twice or three times there with him for the sake of coursing in the early autumn, and the place has always hung on my memory. The people are, of course, creations; I find Katy the general favorite: some scold because I did not marry her, but I hate early marriages, and wanted to show a bright, healthy youthfulness, too busy and too happy for the folly and vanity of a premature love; others say it should have been three volumes, but then the secret must have leaked out. It is better that people should find fault with it as too short than as too long. You know, of course, that it has been some weeks in a second edition, and it will soon, I suppose, go into a third. Now, my dearest, this is twenty times more than I have either written or said to any one about "Atherton," but I thought you would like to know all I could tell you. For the most part my letters are mere bulletins, for I have, as you suspect, gained no ground this cold weather. One day only I was wheeled into K.'s bedroom, while this of mine was well dry-rubbed, carpets taken up, and so forth, but not wetted, for Dr. May dreads the slightest cold, and I myself feel how little I can bear. People have the trick of coming from London to see me and returning at night, but, kind as it is, if these visits come too closely (as one week I had four) they upset me for a fortnight or a month. Above all, if they stay too long, for I am just as cheerful and excitable as ever, and talk within an inch of my life, or, still more, if they arrive too early. I ought only to see one person a day for a short time; but people are very inconsiderate, and the number that come and that write would astonish you. I only just saved myself from the additional suffering of bed-sores by adopting a water-cushion to sit and lie upon (an air-cushion is no use for that purpose), and an air-cushion for the back.

Well, my dear love, I have dwelt too long upon a subject

I hate to write upon; but I know your anxiety. The chief suffering at present, besides the weakness and the weariness, is the horrible neuralgic jar which runs through every limb, often without any apparent cause, always when people attempt to shake hands or to move me in the slightest degree. The pain under the arms is at present, thank Heaven! better. For the rest, people are exceedingly good, for even the troublesome mean, I believe, to be kind, and little Miss Mary is a great comfort and delight. Your charming description of Miss Emily would almost serve for her—she is the brightest, merriest, happiest creature that ever existed—knowing fewer words, I think, than six months ago. You know she was a year old the second of last January, but everybody takes her for a twelvemonth older—she is so tall, so large, and so active, understanding everybody, and making herself understood in spite of her want of language. Such a mimic never was seen. She comes to my door knocking with her little clenched fist every time she can escape from her father and mother and the maid, and in imitation, we suppose, of her brother, folds her little hands every night and says, "Bless papa and mamma and poor *Ba*," the hideous name (nobody can guess why) she will call me. She knows all my things for use or wearing, and is furiously angry if anything she has been accustomed to see in my room meets her eye out of it. "Ba's," she says upon such occasions. "Poor Ba's," "My Ba's." In the same way she brings me all newspapers, letters, flowers, and books, and would certainly fight for the possession of a letter especially, which it is her great delight to deliver with her own hand. I suppose she is pretty, everybody says so, colored like certain balsams and carnations, with the skin of the texture of a rose-leaf, exquisite blue eyes, a merry, round face, a little figure admirably formed with dimples instead of joints, and lovely golden hair curling round her white neck, and two or three shades lighter than her long eyelashes. How I wish I could see you, my dearest, and that we could compare our pets! Do contrive hereafter that they should know each other. I am sure that you would like both K., who is so clever, in spite of a certain contempt for books, and Sam, who, on the

other hand, has a great knowledge of them, and, but for his real modesty, would strike everybody as a particularly well-informed person. I am afraid that I shall lose dear Mr. Kingsley. His sweet wife can only live at Torquay, so that he will get leave of absence, and be backwards and forwards at Eversley; and he is a neighbor to regret. Dear Mr. Crowther! say everything for me to him. I hear a good deal of Cheltenham, and am quite sure that place of pretension and narrowness will not suit him. Mr. Fields was to have been here in England this month, but his visit is deferred till the next, and I have some notion will not take place this year. This is only my feeling, for he says he is coming. So say the Brownings from Italy, and Mr. Boner from Germany. The little Browning boy suffered from malaria at Rome, but is, I think, recovering. John Ruskin has sent me from Rouen the most exquisite photograph of street and cathedral architecture ever seen. I hear a great deal of this war from one and another. Everybody seems to have sons or nephews afloat or ashore. My young neighbor, Sir Charles Russell, who is in the Grenadier Guards, sent us a most interesting letter the other day, with an account of a visit to Abd-el-Kader and an ascent of Mount Olympus. How strange these names sound in correspondence! A friend of mine was telling me last week that his cousin had married a Greek. "Is he a merchant?" said I. "No," replied he, "he is a member for Sparta!"

I have not written a letter one third the length of this these ten months, dear Emily; but it must serve a long while. Let dear Mr. Starkey see it. God bless you!

Ever yours, M. R. MITFORD.

P.S.—Is there to be any "Life" of Miss Edgeworth?

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

July 12, 1854.

MY VERY DEAR EMILY,—Since my last letter I have been much worse, and although a little revived I still continue so. The cause was a visit from a favorite friend, Charles Boner, of whom I must have spoken to you. He came to England

a year before he intended, that he might see me once again, and the excitement and exertion of talking with him brought on such exhaustion and such a struggle for breath that both K. and Sam believed me dying. Mr. May has in consequence prohibited all visitors, and has written himself to Mr. Harness, who had talked of coming for some weeks to a lodging in the village, not to come, and I feel that he is right. He even stints Lady Russell to ten minutes, and wants to stint her to five. So, much as under other circumstances I should have been delighted to see him, it is better that dear Mr. Starkey should not have come. Charles Boner, whose book on chamois-shooting is one of the most interesting works I know, sent this spring through his friend, the Prince of Leiningen, a paper on some improvements in the rifle to Prince Albert, who was much struck with it; and, being now in London, he has been with the Prince, who was still more struck by what passed between them, gave him a letter to the authorities at the Horse Guards, and sent the Woolwich people to request his presence at a council there. So they are in high consultation, and as Mr. Boner will return by Paris, he will probably communicate also with my Emperor (he is an intimate friend of his cousin, the Countess Stephanie Tascher de la Pagerie*), whose knowledge of that subject is very great. It is universally admitted now that Louis Napoleon's "History of Artillery" is the best book on firearms. I can answer for the preface as more amusing and curious than anything since Southey's articles in the *Quarterly*. It will be very interesting to have a graphic report of such an interview. He came by Paris, and says the beauty of the city and the contentment of the people are equally striking. He has not been there these six years, and says it is like magic to see how all that was sordid and squalid has vanished, and been replaced by the grand, the beautiful, and the comfortable—the people, I mean the working classes, never being forgotten for a moment. It is strange how all the world has come round to the respecting that great man—a far greater than the first Napoleon, be-

* The Empress Josephine's father was Tascher de la Pagerie.

cause rather an administrator than a conqueror; one who strives to make his subjects happy rather than to enlarge his domains—a just and noble ambition. Tell dear Mr. Starkey that I hear that the original "Plurality of Worlds" is by Dr. Whewell, of Trinity (I mean the one that maintains that our globe is the only one inhabited); an answer to it, which has attracted far more attention here in England, is by Dr. Brewster. I have read neither. I have just received, with one of his charming letters, dear Mr. Kingsley's "Edinburgh Lectures," and am charmed to find that in the preface he pays a noble tribute to Cambridge, where, as he says, he "learnt to learn." It does honor to the author of "Alton Locke" to offer this testimony at this moment. Also I have had one of the most interesting letters I ever received, from one of whom I have lately heard much, Mr. T. Taylor—certainly the highest-toned of all the "Punch" and "Household Words" school—a Cambridge scholar, who, to maintain his mother and sisters, submitted to very distasteful literary toil, even theatrical burlesques, but who has come out of it unstained, and will be, I predict, amongst the most eminent of our new writers. He has now a place of £800 a year as secretary to the Board of Health. I forgot to tell dear Mr. Starkey how heartily I preferred Mr. Archer's letters to Lord John's in their recent skirmish. Poor Moore cut a worse figure even than his editor, and that is saying much.

And now, my dear friend, good-night. Miss Mary is bright and blooming as ever, in spite of four double-teeth just piercing through. Kiss Miss Emily for me. God bless them both! Ever your affectionate,

M. R. Mitford.

Miss Mitford *to* Miss Jephson.

July 20, 1854.

Ah, dearest Emily, "thrown back" is not the word! You judge me by my letters and my books. The head is mercifully spared, but for above six months I have been steadily growing worse and worse, and weaker and weaker. Mr. Boner's visit was a shake of the glass, but every day the sands run lower and lower. It is sad to write so to you, but

it is the truth. Champagne and nourishing food keep me alive, and stimulating medicine. To-day is fine, and I sit by my open window enjoying the balmy air, although too much sunk in the chair to see more than the trees and the sky, and a bit of distant road, but still enjoying *that.* My roses are very beautiful, and I have many of the old moss, which are delicately sweet; and common white pinks, almost like cloves in their fragrance. I rejoice, dearest, in your garden. I can't help telling you, or rather transcribing for you, what Mr. Fields (his house, Ticknor & Fields, is the greatest publishing-house in America) says of the reception of "Atherton," which, owing to Mr. Hurst sending only part of the sheets, has but just come out in the States. It seems very vain, but it will give you nearly as much pleasure as it does to myself, for your feeling towards me has always borne the character of family affection.

"And now I must tell you with what delight I have read 'Atherton,' and how everybody is charmed with it. Whittier wrote me to-day a note filled with expressions of his gratitude to you for writing such an exquisite story. Every page is a gem, and our newspapers and periodicals are outvying each other in their words of praise. I know of no book that has appeared for years which has been received with such an outburst of applause."

This is no common testimony from a publisher.

My dramatic works are to appear, they tell me, immediately. They were printed, and the preface to them was written, last summer; but I can hardly expect another such success as "Atherton"—the only book that has made a hit this spring.

Read "Chamois Shooting," if you can. It is full of interest, and most different from the run of sporting books in its perfect truth, the absence of all exaggeration—but indeed the author is a very admirable person.

I regret not having known Mr. Starkey, and yet I do know him, and can quite fancy what he is in conversation.

M. R. MITFORD.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LETTERS FROM MISS JEPHSON, W. S. LANDOR, AND MISS MITFORD.—LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH OF MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

MISS JEPHSON writes to Mr. Starkey under date August 2:

"Dear Miss Mitford's letter, which I enclose, is still more touching than the last. She seems to know that the last great change is fast approaching, and yet to have such a calm and cheerful mind, thinking of her friends' pleasures, and making little arrangements for a time when she will be no more. Would to God that I knew more certainly than I do that the great thing of all is not wanting! It has always been a subject of great anxiety to me about her. I know that at one time she did not believe in the divinity of our Lord, and this seems to me a most dangerous error. But a great change may have taken place in her opinions since that time (for it was many years ago), when she expressed to me her *leaning* towards the Unitarian creed, for I think it was no more. When her father was in his last illness, she read to him St. John's Gospel by preference, and he of all others teaches us that great truth, that Christ is God. You see that she speaks in this letter of the comfort that a good pastor can give."

Enclosure from Miſs Mitford.

"Yes, dearest Emily, I have most beautiful roses. I found some of the old sorts and brought some of that exquisite rose *des quatre saisons* which smells so exactly like the attar of roses, moss-roses, maiden-blush, double Scotch, and many others. Then my only expense was for thirty of the very best standards, some low, some high. Then my house was planted by two Hertfordshire friends, and the trees are now climbing

above the parlor windows, and will soon cover the house with the very choicest sorts. Then I have a rose hedge round the front court; so you see we abound. There is a moss maiden-blush which in beauty, in fragrance, and in mossiness excels anything I ever saw. I don't know its name, but it is more beautiful than either the pink or the white moss-rose, fond as I am of the first. I have also a white globe which is more beautiful than any I ever saw, purer, rounder, more perfect in every way; it was sent to me years ago by poor Mr. Milton, Mrs. Trollope's brother. All the gardeners say it is the best white they ever saw. I have told Sam to send you a plant of this rose, and roots of the *Fleur-de-Lis*, and the double wood-anemone. Have you these pretty flowers? I only wish I knew how to make over to you my other roses, but I fear they would not travel. You must write to tell Sam how to send flower-roots when the time comes, and he can add those common and fragrant white pinks which will grow like a weed. Rare flowers I have none, and my little pit has only served to keep alive scarlet geraniums, and common verbenas, fuchsias, etc., for planting out. Still my little garden, full of fruit and flowers (the vegetables being kept out of sight), quite cottage-like, pleases everybody, and Miss Mary runs about in it all the day long. After passing eighteen months with the reputation of being the best and quietest child possible, she has taken to crying after her father, who spoils her more than the rest, and whom she cannot bear out of her sight. I do hope that your sweet Emmy and she will some day know each other. The other day I had an interesting account of the Alhambra from a friend just returned from Spain. The exquisite fretted work of the ceilings, etc., has faded quite white except in a very few shaded places. Enough, however, of the colors remains there to enable the patterns to be made out, and Government are going to restore these magnificent works to as nearly their old state as possible. Nothing ever approached their lightness, delicacy, and beauty. The imitation in the Crystal Palace is like, they say, but conveys no idea of their matchless grace. I am a little revived by the sweet summer air which breathes around me through the open window.

You will like to hear that my dear friend Mr. Pearson gives me the comfort that a good pastor brings.

"Ever, dearest friend, your affectionate

"M. R. MITFORD.

"I kept this letter, my beloved friend (it is now the 29th of July, 1854), the rather that the heats of last week and this week almost killed me. At present we have real cold weather again, which has revived me. Mr. May said yesterday that I was decidedly better, but then I had had some sleep after three nights of absolute sleeplessness. Last night I again passed without closing my eyes, but (a more hopeful 'but' than the last) I have a new chair coming, certainly more roomy, and, I hope, more comfortable than my present. A day or two ago that remarkable man, Mr. Landor, sent me some verses, the most beautiful of the very many that have been addressed to me. He must be eighty. They will probably appear in the *Examiner*. Did I ever send you Dr. Parsons's magnificent stanzas on a bust of Dante? He too has addressed some to me, which I have not seen, but which Mr. Fields says are exquisite. I was much amused by a passage in one of Sir C. Russell's letters the other day (which carried me back to the days of Hogarth and Smollett and the old caricatures written and engraved) on our Gallic neighbors. He says, 'The French soldiers spend all their spare time in hunting frogs. They continue to be as much eaten as ever by French epicures, but only the thighs, which are very small and tender and delicate, and are either taken as a fricandeau or a fricassee.'"

The following letter conveyed the poem from Walter Savage Landor:

Bath, July 24 [no year].

DEAR MISS MITFORD,—It would be ingratitude in me, who have received so much enjoyment and instruction from your writings, were I never to make an acknowledgment of it. My only hesitation in sending these verses was occasioned by the fear that, in an excess of politeness, you might

fancy it necessary to write a line in reply. Pray do not think of it. Your friend Miss Day will inform me of your health, which I most anxiously hope is improving.

Believe me, dear Miss Mitford, yours sincerely,

W. S. LANDOR.

The following was the poem enclosed:

TO MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

The hay is carried, and the hours
Snatch, as they pass, the linden flowers;
And children leap to pluck a spray
Bent earthward, and then run away.
Park-keeper! catch me those grave thieves
About whose frocks the fragrant leaves,
Sticking and fluttering here and there,
No false nor flattering witness bear.

I never view such scenes as these,
In grassy meadows girt with trees,
But comes a thought of her who now
Sits with serenely patient brow
Amid deep sufferings; none hath told
More pleasant tales to young and old.
Fondest was she of Father Thames,
But rambled to Hellenic streams;

Nor even there could any tell
The country's purer charms so well
As Mary Mitford. . . .
Verse! go forth
And breathe o'er gentle breasts her worth.
Needless the task; but should she see
One hearty wish from you and me,
A moment's pain it may assuage,
A rose-leaf on the couch of Age.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

Aug. 10, 1854.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—The enclosed letters came this morning. I have only omitted some passages which would not interest you. Is it not very strange in Miss Mitford to take the part of Mr. Carden against Miss Arbuthnot, the sister and friend who so courageously and effectually de-

fended her? The "attack" was *his*, not theirs; they only assisted Miss A. in repulsing them, and to call their efforts in so good a cause "vixenish attacks" appears to me most unjust censure. If they had screamed and fainted, some people, perhaps, would have thought them more feminine and interesting, but I do not think their brave defenders would have felt the same zeal in their cause. As to Mr. Carden's motive, I think it may be easily guessed, when Miss A. has so large a fortune. I see no cause to admire his conduct in the fray. His party was by far the strongest, and yet he ordered his men to fire upon the less numerous and unarmed defenders of Miss Arbuthnot.

Enclosure:

"I thought I had sent you these noble lines,* dearest Emily; you must give no copy of them—that is a condition. They are by very far the finest stanzas that ever left America, and the author, a young but already celebrated physician of Boston—celebrated, I mean, for medical skill—has written a poem on the death of Daniel Webster very nearly as fine. This grand poem was prefixed to a translation of a few cantos of the 'Inferno' (the translation is not equal to these original stanzas—it would have been strange if it had been!), and that and his increasing practice prevented his going on with his version. The monody on Daniel Webster was printed on a detached sheet, and of course sent to me, and the author was so pleased with my praise of that poem that he sent about amongst his friends begging for a copy of the 'Dante' to send me, having none himself. His letters, too, are delightful. He does not care for my prose, but calls 'Rienzi' the best modern play. Mr. Fields tells me that he has a volume of poems in the press, amongst which is one exquisitely beautiful, addressed to me. I have not seen it. Mr. Landor's poem is at the end of a very short notice of my dramatic works in the last number of the *Examiner*. It begins with a very beautiful summer picture, and is a most remarkable production of a man turned eighty; but of course

* On "Dante," by Dr. Parsons.

Dr. Parsons's poem will be still finer. I have had quantities of such tributes in my life—two very fine things—but these, coming so late, are like gleams of sunshine in my sick-room. I hope that my grateful pleasure is of a deeper sort than mere vanity. There is no doubt that Dr. Parsons will be the great poet of America if his life be spared.

"I must, I think, have spoken to you of my beloved friend, Hugh Pearson—not the young man you imagine, but the most accomplished as well as the most amiable person that I have ever known. He is the bosom friend of Arthur Stanley, and sees all his works through the press; a great friend of Alfred Tennyson's, one of Mr. Gladstone's Oxford committee, the youngest man upon it—altogether, a most distinguished man of letters, although too much engrossed by his own large parish (Sonning) and too excellent a parish priest to think of authorship. Unhappily, he is eight miles off, but he gets to me as often as he can. I always loved him better than any man alive, and he is truly attached to me. I trust dear Mr. Starkey will soon recover; love to him. I am as when I wrote last. Do you know anything of Mr. Carden or the poor young woman? Everybody approves the sentence.

"P.S.—*August* 5. Since writing the above I have read Mr. Carden's speech, which is very discerning; also his conduct in the fray—not returning the vixenish female attacks was manly. What did he want of her? That is the puzzle. Lady Russell, who knew the whole family some years ago, says that the youngest of them must be much turned of thirty, and is very plain. He must be a little wrong in his head. The *Times*, speaking of him, says that, 'besides his English adventures,' they happen to know of certain 'attempts' (I think, or 'intentions,' I am not sure which) 'in the land of romance called Spain.' Can he have been one of the admirers of that enchanting empress who never danced with a man without turning his head? It would have been a curious descent to have thought of her, and then to get into such a scrape for Miss Arbuthnot."

On the 3d of October Miss Jephson writes to Mr. Starkey:

"I wish you had been here when the news arrived that Sebastopol was taken. Poor Mrs. Halloran ran here, the paper in her hand, on Sunday morning when I was at breakfast, saying, 'Sebastopol is taken!' She cannot hear the fate of her nephew for some days, but she had letters from him after his landing on the Crimea. He wrote upon his shako reversed and placed on the sand, and had lain two nights on the ground; the last it rained incessantly, but he was not the worse for it, and was in high spirits. The landing of that immense armament on the shores of the Crimea was, he said, the finest thing that could be imagined; the horses were thrown overboard, and swam ashore."

Miss Jephson sends a quotation from a letter of Miss Mitford in which she says: "I do really believe that it is owing to my being full of life at the heart that I am still alive. I cling to life."

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

Oct. 5, 1854.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,—Thank you for those texts. They are most comfortable. Some are the more welcome that I am at present reading exclusively the New Testament, finding something fresh in the gospels at every reading. These I have just finished, going through them for the third time consecutively. William Harness says that "Christ is one with God." He adds: "I do not know if this be orthodox, but it is what I feel," and surely, in thinking of that divine teaching of Him who came "to seek and to save," it is a comfort so to feel. Thank you again, beloved friend! My own faith is, I suspect, not very orthodox. I believe in the whole Christian church, whatever be the differences of sect or government. How infinitely small are those differences compared with the great accordance! I never venture to think that any one who seeks God in sincerity, and strives to obey his holy laws, can be lost. My only doubts are of myself, because I know so much of my own sins and my present shortcomings, and a little, perhaps, because I feel myself to be so much overvalued. Then I cling to life even whilst I

say, "His will be done!" and pray for a cheerful submission. Well, at all events, I am hopeful for others.

William Harness says he wishes there were a few men like Hugh Pearson in Ireland, for that from what he sees of the clergy he thinks all their religion is merged in a desire to proselytize. He is in Dublin now, where Captain Harness has been sent on some important government mission. Mrs. Hope, though a Frenchwoman, is a devout and steady Protestant, niece of the celebrated physician, Dr. Pichard, and her husband has none of his father's scepticism or his mother's indifference. William Harness himself has neither Catholic nor Puseyite tendencies—only it is a large and liberal mind like Bishop Stanley's, believing good men and good Christians may exist amongst Papists, and will be as safe there as if they were Protestants. For my own part, I have seen such misery follow from distrusting a settled faith, that I should hesitate from converting any one from Papistry to Protestantism for fear of the injury done to the mind by such a demolition of old associations. Dryden somewhere says, not in these words, but to this effect, "that the soul is like a bird at roost, which, plucked violently from its branch, flutters here and there, and refuses to settle again." By the way, do you know Arthur Stanley's life of his father? I think that, if I were compelled to choose between the two, I should prefer *that* life even to the life of Dr. Arnold, and the good bishop himself was charming. I see plenty of letters from the landing-place, Sir Charles Russell being a most attentive and copious correspondent, and the mothers, sisters, and wives of many of his brother-officers interchanging letters with Lady Russell (indeed, there is a whole network of cousinships and intermarriages), which letters she always brings to me. They show a good deal more of depression and anxiety (I am speaking now of their general tone ever since they have been in Turkey and its dependencies) than you would expect from thoughtless, gay young men. I suppose the cause of this is the long peace, which has prevented their becoming accustomed to danger. Also I am sorry to say there is a most affectionate chorus of regrets for the comforts and accommodations of

English life. Think of people bemoaning and bepitying themselves because on the night of landing they were forced to sup on bread and pork, and brandy-and-water! After all, I have not a doubt but these fine guardsmen when once in front of the enemy fought bravely. At present I am forced to play the comforter to my beloved friend, Lady Russell, who was yesterday, and has been every day since the news of the first battle came, "like Niobe—all tears." Now there is terrible anxiety caused by the interval between the announcement of the fight and the list of the killed and wounded. By the way, nothing done by our ministry has pleased me so well as the intention of the Duke of Newcastle to publish the names of the common soldiers as well as the officers. No doubt it is borrowed from or suggested by Louis Napoleon. It is thoroughly in his way, and unlike stiff puppets of routine. I have not seen poor Lady Russell to-day, and am expecting Hugh Pearson. I am often hopeful for myself; it is only by fits that I despond.

Ever yours, M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MR. STARKEY.

Nov. 10, 1854.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—I don't know anything on your side the Channel that would give me greater pleasure than your kind approbation of my plays. When once one has tasted one's fill of praise, one becomes dainty therein, and cares for it only according to the estimate in which one holds the praiser. Vain as it seems to say so, that has been long my case, and would probably have been so (or, rather, perhaps is so) without the conceited clause. Of course the public recognition is a pleasure, but that derived from individual approbation would be of very little worth if it were not backed up by the talent and taste of the individual himself. "Rienzi" had its full share of applause when acted, although Mr. Young vulgarized it as much as possible, never speaking a line as it was written, and once at Newcastle transposing a whole scene—that is, he spoke one scene the wrong while his fellow-actors were speaking the other the right. Although an enormous Mrs. Faucitt and a long,

reed-like girl, Miss Phillips, contended for weakness and stupidity in Lady Colonna and Claudia, yet such was the power of the play that it crammed Drury Lane Theatre upwards of a hundred nights during the two years that Mr. Young remained on the stage, and gave me the pleasure of hearing the pit stop the applause of the boxes that they might not lose a word that the actors spoke. In a somewhat slighter degree all my tragedies had this sort of success, being all of them, in the fullest sense of the word, acting plays, plays of whose effect you cannot judge until you see them upon the stage. But they require great actors and actresses, who have at least truth and feeling. You will now understand why the three new ones, "Gaston," "Inez," and "Otto," being literally impounded at Mr. Colburn's, he having in his hands the only copies in existence—by copies I mean the only MS.—I was induced, in order to get them properly brought out, to permit the stories that followed "Atherton" to be collected and published, and finally, in order to give a little *body* to the prose work (as people say of wine), to write "Atherton" itself. Even the plays that were printed were as full of *errata* as of lines, having been finally reprinted by a man of the name of Cumberland, after the actors, copying faithfully all their blunders, so that seventeen editions (each charged at 3*s.* 6*d.*) of "Rienzi" went forth to the world after Mr. Young's version. Really one is very glad that such copies should be lost. Now there are two volumes that will take their place with their elders and betters, Massinger and company, in great public and private libraries (they are selling in that way slowly and gradually, but steadily and well), and stand a chance of representation, if ever there be again an English theatre, which will inevitably happen if ever there be again either a good actress or a great actor.* Of this there is a better chance since Macready has left the stage, and his most offensive mannerism will die away. One great artist like John Kemble, one man of genius like Kean, one woman of sensibility and power,

* Miss Mitford's surmise proved correct to some extent, for "Rienzi" has lately been reproduced at Her Majesty's Opera-house.

and the theatre would revive under their impulse. In the meanwhile, every week (I had well-nigh said every day) brings a letter from some one whom I most wished to please: yourself, or John Ruskin, or him of the "Dante verses," Dr. Parsons; preferring my tragedies to my other works, and I am well content to have made a large sacrifice in money (for I could have had double what I did receive for my last prose work, if not clogged with the condition of producing the dramatic works in the most solid form), even to have injured my health, by the writing "Atherton" when so unfit for exertion, rather than "die and leave no sign" of the plays which alone gave me pleasure in the conception and realization. Forgive all this egotism, but you pulled the string, and must submit to receive the shower-bath. One other thing I cannot help telling you. Such is the success of "Atherton" in America that they have stereotyped the work—a very rare and a very true test of sale. Also they have made an American engraving of John Lucas's portrait, taken three years ago, which is admirable for likeness and for character. In spite of which, a friend of mine was to send down an artist, a stranger, to take my portrait now! for, reduced to skin and bone, the features all sharpened, but the life remaining, and perhaps increased by the contrast, she wants it perpetuated. It would have killed me as certain as a cannon-ball, for it was evidently an oil-painting, not a drawing. He inquired about lodgings; and my hold on life is as fragile as that of a November leaf to an elm-tree. But people who talk to me for half an hour are as much deceived as you who read my letters, and take the life of mind for life of body. Medical men and clergymen, who know well the physical symptoms of decay, are astonished at me, and go away wondering. To me it seems that there must be a good deal of giving-way in those persons who put on constant outward signs of languishing—a sort of perpetual whine, mental and bodily. It is quite as easy to be cheerful as to assume a dismal sort of patience, and very much better for all parties, the sick and the well. In good part, this is no doubt a question of temperament, and Mr. May says I kill myself by over-excitement and over-

exertion. Well, better that the sword should wear the scabbard than it should rust itself out. Still, dear friend, I fear you will be a false prophet; there is no real change, and for ten days, in consequence of the thoughtlessness and selfishness of others, I fell back utterly. Two days ago I rallied again, and I am giving you the benefit of my first good spirits. I now write two or three confidential lines. In case dear Emily should have told you of an application, volunteered, to the Queen for an increase of pension by my kind neighbor, the Dean of Windsor, and of the result, remember that it is a profound secret. Her Majesty would be much displeased and I much pained, if it were mentioned, more especially if it got into the papers. Even Captain and Miss Harness do not know it, though I thought it due to dear Emily's long friendship to acquaint her. I do not myself yet know the final result—the immediate effect was a cheque on Coutts for £50. It was not I who originated the application, but my kind neighbor, Mr. Wellesley, and he and her Majesty are most earnest in their desire that it should be strictly private. It is this terrible illness which renders another servant necessary, and doubles almost every expense, which alone could make such assistance needful. But even the visitors who come to inquire from great distances, and many of them, under one name or other, take dinner, increase the expenditure of my little household more than would be believed; our postage-stamps average more than a shilling a day.

Thank you and dear Mrs. Starkey for your great kindness respecting my dear friends the Harnesses. I take for granted that Captain Harness is a superior man, since all governments apply to him in their troubles. I also take for granted that he has not the social charm of his delightful brother, or I should have heard of it. But then, very few have. He passed almost all his time at Blaney Castle when in Ireland, Mr. Hope's. Some day or other you will know William Harness, and you will be friends. Besides his varied accomplishments, and his admirable goodness and kindness, he has all sorts of amusing peculiarities. With a temper never known to fail, an indulgence the largest, a tenderness

as of a woman, he has the habit of talking like a cynic; and with more learning, ancient and modern, and a wider grasp of literature than almost any one I know, professes to read nothing and care for nothing but "Shakespeare and the Bible." He is the finest reader of both that I ever heard. His preaching, which has been so much admired, is too rapid, but his reading the prayers is perfection. The best parish priest in London, and the truest Christian. There is nobody like him. Just hear his sister upon that chapter. Thank you, and thank dear Mrs. Starkey, for your kind intention of calling there. I fear the young niece is very ill.

Ah! this war! My friend, Lady Russell, who comes to me every day, will die of it. Her eldest son, the stay of the family, is a captain in the Grenadier Guards, and the poor mother is ten years older since the battle of the Alma. She shows me all Sir Charles's letters. I heard to-day from another friend, whose first cousin, Sir Charles Hamilton, led the Fusileers up the heights. He was sent home for promotion; lost two horses, shot under him; will have to be sent back again, and is half ruined by the expense. The French manage things better. A charming countrywoman of yours, Sir George Shee's sister, wrote me yesterday an amusing story. A French soldier, mortally wounded, asked the priest if Sebastopol was taken, because, said he, "I should like to tell Marshal St. Arnaud."

God bless you! This is my ninth letter.

Ever faithfully yours, M. R. MITFORD.

MISS JEPHSON *to* DIGBY STARKEY, ESQ.

Nov. 9 (1854?).

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—Perhaps you and Miss Mitford have been writing to each other all this time. I had a very long letter from her, dated 6th of October. A great part of it would not, I think, interest you particularly, so I will only transcribe what relates to Mrs. Opie. She says:

"I knew her as a Quakeress, and as the gayest and pleasantest member of the pleasantest and most intelligent society in London. Unluckily, as a Norwich woman, she was thrown among the Gurneys, and took a fancy to Joseph

John, who, after she had very literally set her Quaker's cap at him, married a pretty girl of seventeen. She had been previously engaged to Lord Herbert Stewart — a match which had gone off, because in that age, when broughams and pages were not, they could not muster money enough for such an establishment as their wants required in married people, so she remained the artist's widow, yearning ever after the Quakerly proselytism for her old pleasant society, and certainly attending the May meetings that she might creep into more parties under their cover. I myself have a pleasant proof of this hankering: a visiting-card on which is engraved the plain name, Amelia Opie, encircled by an embossed wreath of roses. Now the book should have taken this tone, or rather, as in the Quaker part of her life, there was nothing to tell; *that* should have been all rose-color, whereas it is all *drab*—not one of the pleasant recollections, of which (except Mr. Rogers) she is the last who can give authentic testimony. Think of a correspondent of Mrs. Inchbald, and a flirt of Godwin and Holcroft's; think of all that is buried under antislavery societies and Joseph Lancaster's schools! If the Quakers demanded a Life to themselves, why not make over the materials to a literary friend and have *two?*"

Mr. R. Bennett (Mrs. Halloran's nephew) was wounded at the battle of Inkerman (a ball passed through his leg, leaving the bone uninjured), so he is sent to Scutari, and thus perhaps his life will be saved, for he will escape the assault, and probably some battles. His colonel and his friend, Colonel Swyny, were killed by his side. He says, "At one time I thought the Russians would have turned our position, and that all would have been lost. They had opened a tremendous fire of artillery on us, and under it masses of their infantry were advancing; at this moment we were ordered to retire, and thus were giving up our position on the heights. It was evident something decided must be done, or the enemy would be in the camp of the second division. Colonel Swyny (whether by order of the brigadier or not, I cannot say) ordered the 63d to halt and front, and advanced to meet the enemy. The regiment obeyed, and immediately

came to the charge, rushed over the crown of the hill, and sent the Russians, in awful confusion, into the valley below. Every man then kept up fire as long as a round of ball or cartridge lasted, and, when all was expended, they followed it up with *stones*."

Mrs. Halloran is come, and I shall be too late for the post if I say more. Ever your affectionate sister,

E. JEPHSON.

MISS MITFORD *to* MISS JEPHSON.

Nov. 28, 1854.

I thank you very much, dear Emily, for your double kindness—the flower seeds and Mrs. Starkey's attention to my friends. They seem absorbed by the illness of the poor girl. Her mother died young, which increases the anxiety. William Harness assures me that they are very sensible of Mr. and Mrs. Starkey's goodness, and were much delighted with both. They have in common the always having kept the very best company, so that, meeting on that table-land, all parties would be equally pleasant to deal with. I feel this kindness of your dear sister and my charming correspondent as if it were addressed personally to myself. Tell them so.

As yet, dear friend, I have escaped cold. Of course the fire is kept up night and day. Sir Charles was safe up to the last account. The badness of the generals, the insufficiency of the hospitals, and especially the want of surgeons, double the danger. We have nothing for us but the bravery of our English, French, and Turkish (for I do not join in the cry against those poor Turks, who could not have saved the batteries, and would only have been butchered uselessly had they stayed), nothing but our common bravery, the certainty that Louis Napoleon will send all the men possible (of course this English government will not), and the goodness of our cause. I dare not, therefore, claim the protection of Providence, for it is amongst his mysteries that national success does not always go with the righteous cause. Finally, no doubt, the scales are held even, but he judges with a clearer sight, and often bides his time. What a mystery war is, look at it as we may! I have lost acquaintances in these battles,

but as yet no friend. Amongst the young men whom I knew was Mr. John Wheble, the Catholic priest—not a convert, but belonging to an old race of English Catholics. He left much to take that dangerous duty; a slight, small, delicate young man, whose fortune was not less than £30,000, weak of body, but strong of heart, and sure to die if stricken with illness, because sure not to spare himself. He belongs to this neighborhood, and was quite as much beloved by Protestants as by Roman Catholics; indeed, in his charities—and all his fortune was spent in charities—he made no sort of difference. I, who firmly believe that every one who sincerely tries to follow the great rule of love which we find in the Gospel may find safety in that great sacrifice, whatever be his creed as to minor points, always rejoice to find such an example as that of poor John Wheble. I believe that his tolerance was constant and sincere. I know that dear Lady Russell's is so. Whatever be the theory of the Roman Catholic faith, happy they whose large-hearted tolerance has room for all! Surely St. Paul, in that passage on charity which, next to the Sermon on the Mount, seems to me the most beautiful ever written, inculcates such doctrine! I have been thinking of these things, because I have been reading a novel called "Philip Lancaster," which a young friend of mine has just inscribed to me. I don't know if I have spoken to you of Maria Norris—have I? Her father, a very clever man, is a great paper-manufacturer, radical, and dissenter, just now one of the candidates for Abingdon. The daughter is a most able person, from nineteen to twenty-two, and her book, full of every sort of artistic fault, careless beyond all description, and with so many repetitions that she might make three volumes into two by the mere process of striking out what she has said twice over, is yet as full of promise as any work that has come out this year. So few dissenters write, or even read, novels, that a bold, uncompromising, candid, impartial book, which shows them as they are, faults, merits, and all, making fierce onslaughts upon their bigotry and intolerance, just as she does on High Church or Low Church, must needs be original and racy, and by taking for the scene of her story a real place (for fictitious scenery never looks true) she has

added wonderfully to the local power. If you meet with it, read it. There is much to blame—indeed, artistically speaking, almost everything—but it is resolutely true to her own impression, large-hearted, large-minded, charitable, eloquent, and bold, with strong, sterling English sense in every page. Still, it will affront all parties, and stand a good chance, I should think, of costing her father his election.

Also I have been reading the feuilletons of the *Presse*, which contain the memoirs of Madame Sand. There is an exquisite bird-story, she being one of those who have the power of taming birds. This interests me much just now, for I told you, I think, my dear, of the robin that tapped at my window, and how we kept for him a tray full of bread-crumbs, to which he has now brought his kinsfolk and friends. He peeps in at the window when he has done his meal, and seems to like looking at me almost as well as I like to look at him. Besides this, the letters between George Sand's father and *his*— [*The rest is wanting.*]

The following extracts were written by Miss Mitford towards the end of her life, and were given by Mr. Bennoch to Mr. S. C. Hall:

To a Friend.

"I do not know that I ever read a finer or truer sentiment than that passage in which you speak of 'giving first.' There is nothing so certain as that where we give what is of most value, that is, kindness, we are pretty sure to have it returned—ay, very often with compound interest. It is the unloving who go through the world unloved, and then they speak of life as they have found it. You, my dear friend, are of a different stamp, and speak of the world as you have made it. For my own part, I can truly say that my whole life would be too short to repay the twentieth part of the kindness that has come to me unsought. My only part being to receive and to love again—poor payment; but yet such as spirits like yours accept in full."

"How you spoil me, my very dear friend! Bodily by grapes and all sorts of dainties, mentally by liking my poor

notes. The French have a famous book, 'A Journey Round my Room;' but I cannot travel even so far as M. de Maistre: from the fire to the window is my longest ride, or rather my longest drive, and the most important event is the arrival of a fresh covey of robins and the emptying their dish of crumbs. We may all find pleasure if we choose to seek and to accept it—ay, and we may all give pleasure after our kind, even as the robins do by a cheerful taking. At that, dearest friend, I am ready enough, as you know to your cost, and I thank you for your intended present of grapes very heartily. I never thought to see that most rich and graceful of all fruit again. But, as I said before, you spoil me."

MISS JEPHSON *to* MR. STARKEY.

Dec. 29, 1854.

MY DEAR MR. STARKEY,—Many thanks for your kind and good wishes for me. I rejoice to hear that Emily is quite well, and Edgeworth, too, recovered. The Mr. Hope who has purchased the Castle Blaney property is a son of "Anastasius" Hope. I will transcribe Miss Mitford's letter, the part of it which relates to the Hopes:

"Dear William Harness is at Blaney Castle with Mr. Hope, who has purchased that beautiful and magnificent demesne, nearly all Castle Blaney, eighteen thousand acres round it, and a fine house, magnificently situated. It stands (William says) on a precipitous wooded bank, looking down upon a beautiful lake of one thousand acres, with two or three picturesque islands, and finely wooded and varied shores; all this, and the opposite woods and hills, seen from the hall door and from the windows of the principal rooms. Mr. Hope's clear income from English landed property is £80,000 per annum, besides immense sums in capital and in collections of every sort. Two separate collections of pictures, one Italian, the other Dutch and Flemish, almost unmatched as belonging to a private man. William says that he has made this purchase chiefly to obtain a larger sphere of usefulness, adding, 'and a little, perhaps, to show his administrative talent in the government of a neglected and improvable Irish estate. He will do immense things

for the people, if they will lend themselves to his plans. It is not so much want of principle that makes them so difficult to deal with,' pursues William, 'as a sort of caprice on which there is no calculating, and for which it is impossible to detect any sort of reason.' I don't think William likes the people so well on this second visit as he did on the first; he has been in Dublin with his brother, sent by government on some mission (Captain Harness is a most distinguished engineer), and went to Donnybrook Fair—the dullest fair, he declares, that he ever saw. He makes one observation that is striking, that 'whilst the children, mostly ugly, have yet an expression of fun which would do honor to Puck, the old people, and even the middle-aged, are the saddest-looking race he ever beheld.' Is this true?

"Mr. Hope does everything with a magnificent largeness and liberality; some day or other I will tell you of the arrangements at the Deepdene, where every guest has a suite of rooms—five for a married couple, bed-chambers, chambers for the lady's-maid and the valet, and a sitting-room. It is at everybody's option to breakfast down stairs or up, the luncheon assembling the party at two o'clock. Single visitors have three rooms—a bed-room for themselves and their personal servant, and the never-forgotten sitting-room, full of books, French, German, and English, drawing materials, and music, with (I believe) a piano. I am afraid to tell you how many of these suites of apartments there are; the books are the newest and the best. You know that it is the very temple of art; but the master's conversation is the finest thing in it. He is the eldest son of the author of 'Anastasius,' a most active man of forty; he gives the highest wages, is princely in his housekeeping and in everything he does; but, like his father, keeps his own accounts, and won't be cheated. It's a mind like Napoleon's."

Now I think that this is all I can find in Miss Mitford's letters about the Hopes. Mr. Harness is one of Charles Kemble's executors. I had a letter from Miss Mitford a few days ago dated December 22. She says: "Last Saturday, my sixty-eighth birthday, began brightly, but ended in one of those frightful headaches which leave me prostrated

for ten days. I am now getting very slowly and gradually better, but I never quite regain the strength I lose."

The following is an extract from a letter addressed to Mrs. Crowther, and copied by Miss Jephson for Mr. Starkey. The date is January 1, 1855:

"The longer I live the more I see that kindness, even although, as in my case, it has often been little more than kind intentions, is sure to be repaid, if not by the intended objects, by other persons. For my own part, the goodness shown to me often draws tears into my eyes. People whom all the world knows, and, yet more, people of whom I have never heard, write to me, send to me whatever they think I shall like, call at my door (and, after getting to Reading by the Great Western, there are six miles out and back of fly-carriage), come at any hour that I may appoint, if I be well enough to see them, and never take offence at a refusal. There is a reality about this when it has lasted above two years. Mr. May is just like a son to me, Lady Russell comes to see me every day like a sister, and I have two servants, very superior people, who nurse me just as if I were their mother. It has pleased Providence to preserve to me my calmness of mind and clearness of intellect, and also my powers of reading by day and by night, and, which is still more, my love of poetry and literature, my cheerfulness and my enjoyment of little things. This very day, not only my common pensioners the dear robins, but a saucy troop of sparrows and a little shining bird of passage whose name I forget, have all been pecking at once at their tray of bread-crumbs outside the window. Poor, pretty things! How much delight there is in these common objects, if people would learn to enjoy them! I really think that the feeling for these simple pleasures is increasing with the increase of population."

Miss Mitford's last letter to Miss Jephson is dated January 2, 1855. She refers to the exertion of writing the above letter:

Yesterday, dearest Emily (New Year's Day), I had a terri-

ble attack of retching, a new and very bad symptom. It came on after writing, and therefore I seize a calm moment to send you thanks and blessings, and to say that you will probably receive no more letters from your poor old friend.

May God be with you, and with all whom you love, especially Mr. and Mrs. Starkey, who have been so kind to me!

Little Mary is two years old to-day.

Ever faithfully yours, M. R. MITFORD.

MISS MITFORD *to* MRS. BENNOCH.

Jan. 7, 1855.

Thanks, dearest Mrs. Bennoch, for all your goodness past and present. May God long bless you and your dear husband with everything that kind hearts can wish!

There is wonderful vitality in me, and I have rallied to a certain point. But I must write no more notes or letters. They say that exhaustion of the brain from writing brought on the sickness that alarmed every one on New Year's Day.

Your dear husband must come and see me—I suppose the 27th, but will let him know if not. Ever yours,

M. R. MITFORD.

She died on the 10th of January.

Miss Jephson, in sending to Mr. Starkey on the 17th of January a copy of Miss Mitford's letter to Mrs. Crowther, dated January 1, adds:

"You and Isabella have indeed a right to this note of dearest Miss Mitford, for you see how she thought of you and of your kindness to her when she knew that she was dying.

"If you had seen her you would have known, even more than you can now do, how much there was in her to love as well as to admire; but then your grief would have been greater.

"Do you think that Miss Mitford's letters will be published? She is known to have been a charming letter-writer, and there must be an almost inexhaustible store of them, for she had numerous correspondents, and few people, I think, would destroy such letters."

We here deposit our wreath on the tomb of Mary Russell Mitford. Our materials are not exhausted, but we have adduced a bright array of witnesses to her patience, cheerfulness, and rare mental endowments. She left the world richer for a noble example, and few have been so warmly loved or so deeply regretted by English hearts on both shores of the Atlantic.

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